

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Hope in the midst of Taber High School tragedy

A town of 7,000 deals with shooting

Stephen VanHelden

TABER, Alta. — Pastor Mike Vandyk of the Taber Christian Reformed Church was at home preparing for the next Sunday's sermon when he received a call with the shocking news that there had been a shooting at W.R. Myers High School in town. While the details were sketchy on that dreadful Wednesday afternoon, it soon became apparent that the son of an Anglican priest had been killed and another student seriously injured. The 14-year-old who had pulled the trigger was a former student at the school and, under the Young Offenders Act, cannot

be named.

Jason Lang, 17, son of Rev. Dale Lang was killed on Wednesday, April 28, only eight days after the massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado. In the days following, an amazing story of faith in Jesus, the ability to forgive the gunman and the importance of a personal relationship with Christ emerged as Dale Lang and his family faced the world without their son and brother.

Vandyk visited the Lang family the day after their son was killed to offer condolences and comfort. "I talked to Rev. Lang on Thursday and he immediately [said] he

wanted to make some meaning of Jason's death. Sometimes as a minister you're expected to be strong, but sometimes you can't do that," said Vandyk.

Lang has shown remarkable strength in the days that have followed, which included facing hordes of media from as far away as England. "He knew the Lord had given him the strength and already had elements of the memorial service in mind. He wasn't so much grieving at that point but ready to do the work of the Lord," explained Pastor Vandyk.

Pointing to the Creator

At the emotional memorial service, Lang spoke of forgiveness, the gift of Jason's life and the need

for love in a broken society. "God is hungry to pour his love into our hearts right now. He so desires to do this," Lang told about 2,500 mourners, a CBC television audience and dignitaries seated in the front row. The congregation included Premier Ralph Klein,

Reform Party Leader Preston Manning and Aline Chretien, wife of the Prime Minister.

"I can't find words to explain how [God] impressed this upon me. I'm not talking religion, I'm not talking denomination, forget it. See PRIEST page 2...

CRC board wants to can Abuse Prevention office

Disability Concerns' would meet same fate

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — If the 1999 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America does not challenge recommended ministry changes which were recently brought before the church's Board of Trustees, the CRC will dispense with its abuse prevention co-ordinator and her office. That groundbreaking position, held by Beth Swagman, was established in 1994 as part of a concerted denominational effort to pastorally deal with abuse suffered by church members, perpetrated by other church members and even church leaders. At the same time, the CRCNA would also dissolve its office of Disability Concerns, and that office's directorship held by Rev. James Vander Laan.

The Abuse Prevention and Disability Concerns ministries have both functioned under what has been known as the Pastoral Ministries Board, as have three other ministries: Chaplaincy, Race Relations, and Pastor-Church Relations.

"The Pastoral Ministries Board was a kind of shotgun marriage of five agencies," asserts Rev. Peter Nicolai, chairperson of the Canadian Ministries Board of the Christian Reformed Church. "The board decided to dissolve itself. They're recommending getting rid of the directorships and are going to try to carry on with associates."

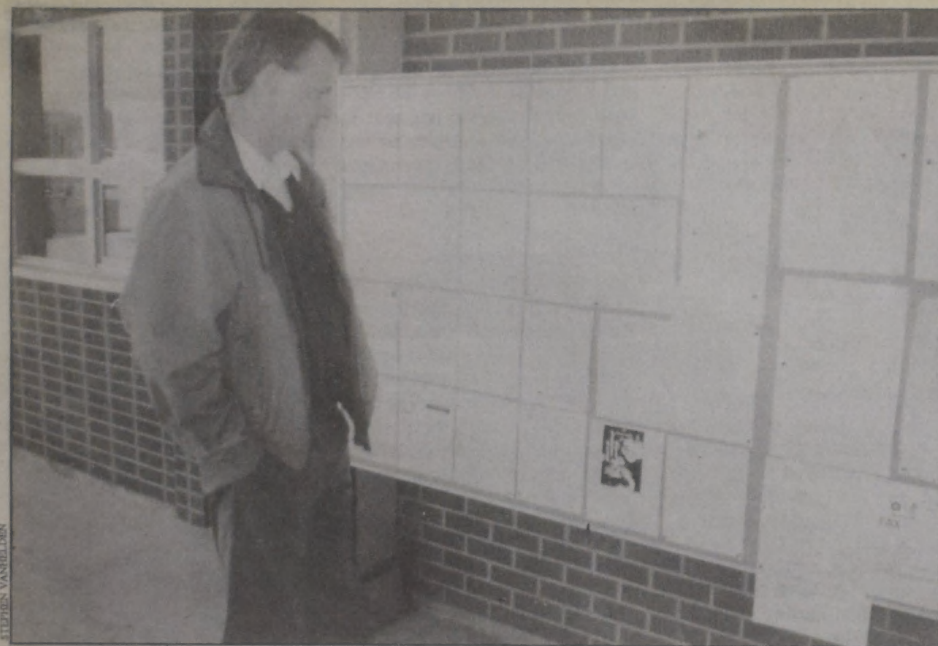
"This would mean Beth Swagman is getting shafted," Nicolai



Beth Swagman

says bluntly. I'm not clear on their reasoning at all. In my estimation she has done an excellent job. They want an ordained person to work on this. That means a male. How effective is that going to be? Most abuse victims are female and are not going to want a male in this position. It came down rather suddenly, though I knew the Pastoral Ministries Board was going to dissolve itself. And [Swagman] had a difficult time as executive director of that board. But she had to deal with chauvinism that is unbelievable. She's not getting any pastoral understanding."

Beth Swagman herself is concerned first of all for her ministry. "This would bring my ministry to a premature end," she says. "That's of great concern for all these people [who used this ministry]. It will perpetuate people's silence and shame. And for offenders who have been on edge because this... See SWAGMAN page 2...



Pastor Mike Vandyk reads some of the condolences posted outside W. R. Myers High School. People from around the world sent faxes, letters and cards.

The virtue of liturgical smarts pp. 12, 13
Remembering worship experiences pp. 14, 15



Playful 'treatises' on worship styles pp. 11, 16, 17
Concentration camp survivor tells her story pp. 18, 19

News

Swagman cites lack of support as female executive

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office exists, in a distorted sense it would give them a way to think: this wasn't so serious. This would set back justice and accountability for offenders. The spiritual effects for both victim and offender will have a huge impact. You can't be abused, or abuse, without it inflicting spiritual damage."

Swagman candidly admits there were problems when she was head of the Pastoral Ministries Board. She was the first female executive director in the Christian Reformed Church, a position from which she resigned "under duress" last year, hoping she could better pursue abuse prevention full time rather than spending part of her time on administrative details.

Little support

"The environment in which I had to perform my tasks as executive director was not a supportive environment," says Swagman. "As the first woman executive director in the church that was a primary role, but I was not given support, respect. The environment was not healthy and no one addressed this."

She admits that "I probably shouldn't have been in that position; there are things that I brought to the table as well, but nevertheless, if you're going to bring a woman into this all-male environment, you'll make provisions; but they didn't. They didn't seem to care."

The Pastoral Ministries Board considered whether it should have



Peter Nicolai

a full- or part-time director, and decided it wanted someone full-time. But instead, at a meeting last month it decided to dissolve itself, recommending to the Board of Trustees that some of its ministries instead be carried on under the umbrella of various denominational "offices," and that two — Abuse Prevention and Disability Concerns — be disbanded because adequate resources are now available to church members locally.

Those proposed changes were brought by the Pastoral Ministries Board in the form of recommendations to the most recent meeting of the denominational Board of Trustees, May 6 and 7. The Pastoral Ministries Board recommended [before it was disbanded] that by December 31 of this year, the Abuse Prevention and Disability Concerns offices and their directorships be terminated.

The proposal to dissolve Abuse

Prevention and Disability Concerns came out of a March 22 meeting between the five members of the Pastoral Ministries Board and the church's executive director Peter Borgdorff. It was decided that Rev. Duane Visser, who is head of Pastor-Church Relations, be slated as the person to deal with any abuse concerns on the denominational level.

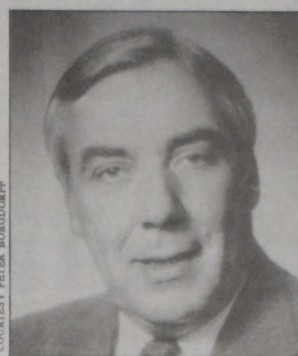
"The Board of Trustees concluded that the questions [about these ministries] raised by the Pastoral Ministries Board were valid," Borgdorff told CC. However, "the conclusions should be based on a systematic review [of these ministries]," the trustees said.

Swift, negative response

Nicolai speculates that the trustees' calling for a systematic review instead of accepting the demise of those two ministries by the end of the year might have been due to immediate protests it received from abuse prevention specialists, other church members and from Nicolai's Canadian Ministries Board.

There are many, especially in Canada, apparently, who argue the validity of questions raised by the Pastoral Ministries Board. Faye Martin, co-ordinator of the CRC's Classis B.C. Southeast abuse response team, is one of them.

"In the Acts of Synod there is a statement that 'studies and statistics today indicate that the incidence of abuse within the church is equal to that of the general population,'" she says. "When the CRC



Peter Borgdorff

synod took a stand and backed it up by committing the church to a response to the sin of abuse and created the office of abuse prevention, it gave a very strong message. Without that office the message will no longer have its impact and no classis will have a person to contact for counsel or guidance on setting up abuse response teams."

Martin fears that, if the denomination no longer has a visible abuse prevention office, abuse "will slip back into being a silent issue again." She says, "My experience in this field has shown me the seriousness of the emotional and spiritual impact it has on individuals who have experienced abuse. I believe the church has a responsibility to address that spiritual dimension as well as the emotional impact. I am not able to understand how that can be enhanced or improved or encouraged when a move like this is taking place."

More than words

She concludes, "I believe it is an issue that calls for justice and mercy, and needs to be addressed in deed, not only in some printed word in some obscure place that most church members are not even aware exists. The Office of Abuse Prevention is a tangible expression of the churches' desire to secure justice and healing for all persons involved. It is also instrumental in empowering victims to find and use their voices."

Martin has nothing but high praise for Beth Swagman. Swagman worked closely with Martin's classis in helping co-ordinate a Sexual Abuse Leadership Team (SALT), and before that, helping B.C. South-east set up its abuse response team. "This is a difficult ministry," Martin says. "It's pretty intense and it requires a fair bit of training and needs leadership skills. Beth had that. I see it being impossible to continue this ministry without her leadership."

A carrot dangled

Martin makes no secret of being leery about what might have been behind these recommendations. "This is not due to 'restructuring.' I've been told that the churches [i.e., congregations] don't want denominational ministries/heads any more. That there are more resources available at the local level, and that abuse prevention is a ministry that can be done at the local level. I don't buy it. Even with all the work Beth has done, only 12 of the 47 classes have set up abuse prevention teams. You think that's going to continue without that denominational office urging the churches not to ignore the issue?"

She continues, "Those of us involved in this were never asked. You [CC] are hearing my voice. You're the first — and our classis is more involved in this issue than any other in the church. A step like this would weaken abuse response teams. It would weaken the stand of the CRC. It feels like a carrot was dangled in front of us then pulled away. I feel like I'm going to spend years mopping up."

Tremendous help

Christian Reformed Church member and farmer Nick Langelaar of Hague, Saskatchewan, is concerned, from another point of view, about the possible demise of the Beth Swagman's office. "We have dealt with an abuse issue — with our son in a Christian school — on a personal basis. Beth Swagman was of tremendous help to us," he says. "We were glad to see the CRC going in that direction [of developing an abuse prevention office]. I would see this as a blow to the movement."

Langelaar also wonders about the reasoning behind the decision. "They call it 'restructuring.' I'm not convinced that's really the motive behind it all," he admits. "I've been told, 'She's fulfilled her mandate.' Well, there's a whole lot more to dealing with abuse in the church than setting up a policy. If she were appreciated, she'd still be there. It seems they're already talking about a replacement [Duane Visser]. That's what really bothers me. The ironic thing is she's working for abuse prevention, and I see this as abusive."

See page 8 for interview with Salem director Al Dreise.

Priest challenges community: "Let the love of God in"

... continued from page 1

that stuff. I am talking about the Creator of all things saying to us here now that he loves us and he wants us to respond," said Lang.

"My heart is aching because my son is no longer here, and when this is all done, and today is gone and tomorrow comes, I have to face an empty bedroom in my house. But I want Jason's death to count for something," he continued.

Lang challenged the students, staff and parents from the community: "If you let the love of God in, he radically transforms a community. Instead of finding a kid who happens not to be a jock or the best-looking kid and picking on him we could have a kid come into our school and welcomed and

cared for by the other students. That would be awesome," he said.

Christians reach out

Love was definitely on the minds of students at Taber Christian School, as they also had to deal with a student in their town being killed. Girls in junior high made a special card to take to W.R. Myers High School. Along with the boys they boarded the school bus, picked up some flowers and stopped in to show their support for students at the school.

The broader Christian community also reached out in other ways including a special prayer service at Taber Christian Reformed Church on Sunday. "It was a time of healing, a time to work through the evil and to keep going,"

explained VanDyk.

Lang also spoke a prayer at the spot where Jason was killed. "We cast evil out of this place," he said. Later in the ceremony at the prompting of Lang, students recited in unison, "This is our school," reclaiming the school as their own. "In Colorado they talked about bulldozing down the school, well that's not a solution. We can't let fear win," said Lang.

Students from W.R. Myers returned to school on Tuesday, and Lang and his wife were on hand to welcome the students back. Amazingly, attendance was higher than normal, principal Don Gellatly reported. "It's good, we want things to get back to normal."

Environment

And now a word to young people: *DREAM!*

I was standing knee deep in snow in the river valley when the ACCESS TV reporter asked, "What advice do you have for job seekers in the environment sector?" I admire folks who are cool under the glassy gaze of a TV lens. They make thinking fast on their feet or memorizing a script at a glance look so easy. So after calmly advising viewers to gain skills and get the advice of a professional in the field, I blurted out, "and follow your dream."

Now is dream-seeking simply a cute cultural truism, or does it reflect sound biblical advice? Does it fit the test of time and the One True Story? Well, yes and no; and here is why I say that.

Pray, and never give up

Following your dream to many people sounds like a formula for failure. Most of us, we say, should choose the sensible path that presents itself most readily before us. Dreams often end in disappointment. But failure, frustration and uncertainty are common life experiences. The sting of falling short of a lofty goal is always with us; but so too is satisfaction, if we follow some key advice.

Jesus put it this way to his disciples: They ought always to pray, and never give up. On secular TV that day, I gave part of that advice

— never give up and follow your dream. But I hesitated to add prayer. Doing so might mean my entire comment would hit the cutting-room floor, edited out as "overly religious."

It would undoubtedly have seemed, from a secular point of view, like such a silly thing to suggest to a job seeker. And outside of a vision of the Kingdom, I guess it is silly. But from inside, it is essential. Do you want to find a meaningful career? Seek the Kingdom, pray and never give up!

But dreams are tricky things. They can be mere infatuations, shaped by the whim of culture. There are all sorts of dream-shapers around today. How do I know which voice to follow?

There is no easy answer to this question. But I think heroes can help. Finding heroes, both past and present, is relatively easy in sports or music or film. But are there any

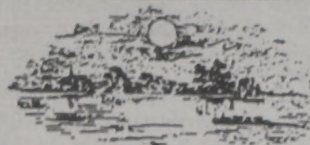
environmental heroes that we can follow? Is there anyone who will inspire us to look after creation?

Yes, but you may need to look hard to find them. The story of the Old Testament Joseph has often inspired me. This great dreamer, with his coat of many colors, "managed" the greatest environmental disaster to hit the Middle East in centuries. But he isn't the only one.

A search for heroes

Today I think we often overlook the Christian environmental professionals who are working on both land and sea. These women and men are farmers, fishermen, foresters and miners (all tasks described in Scripture). They are engineers, biologists, geographers — and managers too. They are people who know that there isn't simply one way to work with the earth.

We have a choice. We can

Creation waits...

John Wood

serve our Master by learning to serve the creation. Or we can simply rip and tear at the earth with little thought to the consequence. We can see our company business or industry as simply resource extraction, or we can choose to see it in the light of the steward's charge.

Finding a useful place to serve is both easy and hard. There are so many needs, but so few willing to take up the challenge. We can choose to serve both people and the earth — or not. When choosing a career these are the central questions we face. The Greeks said:

"Know yourself." We translate: follow your dream. The Hebrews said: "Whom will you serve?" We say: "What gifts do you have?" and "Will you follow your dream?"

Lacking a clear vision, the people perish. So find your dream, follow it prayerfully, and never give up. The creation is waiting with eager expectation to see what you will do.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton.

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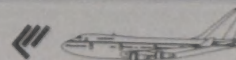
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Editorial

My generation's sins are visited upon your generation

Letters from a senior to a junior editor (9)

My Dear Wordgood:

You and I sure live in exciting times. We are beginning to understand so much more about the human psyche, thanks to people like Freud, Adler, Jung, et al. We are learning more about why people behave in certain ways and how personalities develop.

Psychotherapy has put a benign face on emotional and mental problems. I clearly see God's love reaching out to us through psychotherapy. It's such a wonderfully non-judgmental approach to our problems. Therapists would not dream of telling us we are wrong. Instead, they want to help us understand why we do certain things and how we can avoid destructive patterns of behavior.

In connection with this non-punitive approach to our problems and flaws, I want to share some thoughts I have on generational shadows.

Visiting the sins

There's a line in the Ten Commandments that has for some time intrigued me. I am referring to what God says in the context of idol worship and how he *punishes* (NIV translation) the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (Ex. 20:5).

That text seems to be in direct contrast to what we read in Ezekiel 18, where God says that "the son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son" (Ezekiel. 18:20). "The soul who sins is the one who will die" (vs. 4).

To tell you the truth, my dear Wordgood, I much prefer the King James translation of Exodus 20:5, where we read of God "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." To visit the sin of the fathers on the children is more in line with the Ezekiel passage than the idea of *punishing* the children for the sin of the fathers. I do remember from my childhood years in Holland that the Dutch translation also talked about visiting the sins. (Of course, the Dutch are strong when it comes to visiting of friends and relatives, which can turn into something akin to having sins visited upon you.) The idea of a visitation makes more sense. To punish the children for the sin of the fathers is to make them culpable, something that God does not want to do.

The good news is that God does not hold us responsible for the sin of our parents. "For every living soul belongs to me," says God, "the father as well as the son — both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die" (vs. 4). But even there God offers a way out: "But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be re-

membered against him" (vs. 21,22). God does not take any pleasure in the death of the wicked, reports Ezekiel. He wants them to turn from their evil ways. And he certainly does not hold anything against the children of a wicked person, unless those children perpetuate the wicked trend of their parents.



Kids, too, make mistakes

And that, dear Wordgood, brings me to my second observation. We are responsible for our own sins. If there is any-

thing our society has to learn it is that we must not project all problems onto others. I see a lot of that going on in the election campaigns in this country. Everything is blamed on the government. In Ontario, Premier Harris is held responsible for the mess in education and in health care. We don't want to examine our own responsibility for the problems we encounter.

A humorous but sad example of that shifting of responsibility can be found in a court case referred to as "School District of Philadelphia versus Friedman, no 2073 C.D., 7 April, 1986, Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court." The case had to do with a district school employee who had been fired for consistently turning up late for work. He successfully sued his employer because he was a victim of "chronic lateness syndrome."

This travesty of justice is symptomatic of a general refusal to assume responsibility for our own failures. Is it perhaps also related to an abuse of psychotherapy? No amount of counselling relieves us from the stark reality of our own responsibility and our inclination toward evil.

At such a time it is useful to quote the darker passage in Ezekiel 18: "The soul who sins is the one who will die."

Sometimes we want to blame our parents for our own problems. But we are forgetting that we are in the process of having *our* sins visited upon the next generation. Ultimately it's not about blame anyway, is it, Wordgood. When it comes to determining blame or guiltlessness, who can stand before the righteous God of heaven and earth? It's much more important to forgive and be forgiven. That way Christ's death and resurrection cuts right through personal and generational sins.

*Affectionately yours,
Trusty*

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Don't blame the kids

Some years ago, I heard a Dutch radio preacher address the Exodus text, and he made a clear point of saying that we should read the text as "visiting the sin." That way we acknowledge that the mistakes of our parents have a negative effect on the children, but it's not the children's fault. When the father is an alcoholic, for example, the children suffer the effects. Sometimes those effects carry through for generations. But, he said with great emphasis, the children are not guilty and they do not deserve to be punished for it.

The Dutch preacher mentioned how we sometimes transfer the guilt of the parents onto the children. During the Second World War, some people in Holland collaborated with the German occupiers. After the war these people were punished. But decades later, the children of these collaborators were still shunned, even though they were not guilty of anything.

There is a cure

To interpret the Exodus text as meaning that the sin of the fathers is visited on the children, allows for renewal and hope. The sin of parents acts as a curse on their offspring, true; but efforts can be made to lift that curse. A victim of abuse can turn to a support group or a counsellor and explore ways of lifting that curse. The victim is not guilty and therefore deserves no punishment. Instead, he or she deserves to be freed from the curse.

You and I may thank God for the discovery of psychotherapy, which enables us much better than was possible in earlier centuries to get out from underneath the sin of the fathers. The visitation of sin can be cancelled. I am grateful for Christian therapists and counsellors who are able to help us disentangle ourselves from the mistakes of the past.

Letters

When is war justified?

In his comments on NATO Bombing (CC, May 3), Gerald Vandezande makes reference to commentaries by Ernie Regehr and Senator Roche and states both men are "highly respected experts when it comes to life-and-death questions of peace and conflict." They may well be, but I am a little surprised by Mr. Vandezande's "deeply troubled" position.

Yes, this war is a troubling development, but Mr. Roche is quoted as saying that "meaningful negotiations" were never conducted. My observations may be tainted by media reporting, but NATO did have many years of prior experience with turmoil and hatred in this corner of Europe.

Unless NATO were to state an ultimatum, negotiations might well go on until total "cleansing" and occupation were completed.

Whether an air-only war is what's needed is another question. But that a negotiation deadline was set, resulting in armed conflict and much suffering, is something to which God's Word does speak. Many readers of CC are familiar with John Calvin's teachings based on the Bible. According to Calvin, God tells us that the cause of war is the co-existence of two opposing principles in the world; namely, the principles of righteousness and of iniquity, of truth and error, God and Satan. These can never live together in harmony.

Fighting for justice

When evil will have its way and cannot be cowed into submission by any other means, the use of armed force becomes inevitable. God clearly states that the principal end for which governments and nations are established is the preservation of justice.

So when is war justified in the preservation of justice? When all else has failed, just wars are engaged in for the maintenance or restoration of justice. No one questions that the Serb-led aggression against Kosovo is unjust aggression, but one hears little about "justice." Society as a whole speaks much about rights, little about justice, and almost never about justice by the sword.

Not so with God. Those familiar with God's Word know that the whole Bible, the story of salvation itself, is all about justice. God is just – a concept totally foreign to the fallen human heart.

And yet, for the re-born heart, filled with his Spirit, the administration of justice in a fallen world is still sanctioned and demanded by God himself. As instruments in his hand, our administration of justice will always be prone to much error, and will remain so until Jesus' return.

Our question should not be focused on the horrors of war, but rather on being able to discern what is of God and what is of Satan. And that is not easy when we study the history in this corner of Europe.

Let us not forget to pray for our government and for NATO leaders.

Jerry De Boer
Exeter, Ontario

Editorial illustrates recent experience

After returning from a recent visit to our son and daughter-in-law in Oxford, England, I read with great interest the April 5 editorial entitled "Is it alright to cry on Good Friday?" The Russian story you related struck me with even greater interest, since it illustrated our recent experience so vividly.

Our son and daughter-in-law are members of the Russian Orthodox Church. While in England we observed the Orthodox Easter with them. This feast has been traditionally celebrated in a unique way, with great happiness and joy, and is still carried on in the same manner.

The service begins on Saturday evening at 10 o'clock. The church sanctuary is quite dark, and the worship consists of readings and chants by the bishop who, at this time, is dressed in black. Another member of the clergy waves the (incense) censer, which has a bell inside it.

At midnight, the bishop appears from behind a white veil behind the altar, dressed in a beautifully embroidered white cassock. He announces with great happiness and joy: "The Lord is risen!" The congregation

responds loudly with the words: "He is risen indeed." The bishop and other clergy then wend their way through the congregation, which has been standing all this time. Traditionally there are no pews in Orthodox churches, and there weren't in this one, only a few chairs on the side.

Candles and chandeliers are lit, and the procession proceeds to go outside where everyone follows to circle the church. Still carrying our lit candles we enter the church again, and this time it is the congregation's turn to greet the bishop and clergy with the same greeting: "The Lord is risen," and they respond with the words: "He is risen indeed." But this time, we the congregation kiss each of the clergy (three times no less!). The celebration ends with a lavish feast spread out on tables, which most people partake of.

By this time it is about 3 a.m., but a joyous atmosphere still prevails. We were very impressed and moved by this worship service and will long remember it.

Alice Kooy
Camlachie, Ont.

Pastor and family found support

A year ago, CC featured an article on the financial situations of Canadian Christian Reformed Church seminary students and their families. Our family story was included in the article, telling of some of our personal struggles and some of the many blessings we felt along the way. We shared our story to build awareness: many have expressed to us and others in our situation that they just didn't realize the load that many students with families carry.

We shared our story to inform supporters and potential students of some of the realities facing those wanting to train for ministry in the CRC today. Happily, we have seen and heard of increased financial assistance and opportunities for many new and present students, offered since the publication of the

CC article.

We shared our story to encourage supporters and others in their generosity: there are many gifted men and women waiting to train and work in ministry – money should not be the one thing preventing them from serving fully.

As a result of the article, we have been gifted as a family with the prayers and support offered in notes and letters from some of CC's faithful readers. The love and encouragement given in the notes both humbled and built us up. For these we thank our Father in Heaven.

Thank you, also, to Bert Witvoet and CC for running the article.

Pete and Jen VanderBeek and children
Forest, Ont.

Says Nepal information inaccurate

The story in your April 19 issue about the confrontation between the police and Christians in Nepal is incorrect. It is not easy to be a Christian in Nepal and this type of incorrect news does not help their cause.

The following is what really happened on Good Friday according to Linda McKee, assistant to the executive director of the United Missions to Nepal. She was not present during the incident, but had accurate information from very reliable sources.

There was some provocation on the part of the Christians, about 60 people, who went to the district office, started to sing and pray out loud (which is a tradition in Nepal) and rattled the gates.

Since Nepal had the first phase of its general elections on May 3, there has been an increased sense of security awareness and thus the Christians' action could easily have been misread.

The Christians were also informed the night before that they could not meet on public ground, but could hold their meeting on their own property. This is what did happen, and there were no further incidents.

Only three people attended a local hospital and no-one was hospitalized and no-one required treatment in the operating room. Interestingly, this news item happened to be in the same issue as your editorial "Don't believe everything you are told by the media." We might add that we should not believe everything we are told on the Internet either.

Hubert Budding
Toronto, Ont.

Note: Compass is an authoritative news service, to which we subscribe, whose specialty is the persecuted church and which has people in the field. We have no reason to distrust their information.
Editor

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Opinion/Column

What do we sing in church these days?

Frank DeVries

For nearly 15 years my wife and I had not been able to worship in a mainstream church. Although we grew up in a Christian Reformed Church, during these last 15 years we lived in an area where there was no such church, and so during that time we worshipped in a Community church (sort of like Heinz 57 varieties) which was serviced mostly by retired preachers of different denominations who took their turn once every six weeks or so to bring The Word. Back in "civilization," we have been attending a variety of regular denominational services, but are quite startled by what has been happening to the songs used in these places. Let me explain.

First, I'm mostly referring to the songs that are picked by "worship teams" or "praise teams." Such a group of musicians usually performs on a piano, a set of drums, a synthesizer, one or more guitars and often a flute or violin. Generally the performance is good, occasionally even startlingly excellent. But although the melodies are often interesting, the lyrics just as often are extremely individualistic in a negative sense: "I want, I need, I lack, I desire."

Generally there emanates from these songs a sense of "wanting" rather than "giving."

Second, there is but little literary value inherent in many of the lyrics. Many (though certainly not all), of these songs seem to be simplistic and insipid hand-me-downs from songs one can hear on many Christian music stations. And then, of course, we run into another problem—most of the groups that are played on these stations sound disconcertingly similar, often featuring soloists with "teflon" voices that all sound identical.

'Vain repetitions'

Third, there frequently is a large amount of repetition taking place. Repeating little phrases that, when done often enough, can drive one to distraction. It is difficult to understand why this is done: are we trying to convince ourselves? The Book of Psalms has only two Psalms that use obvious repeats, Psalm 119 and 136. With this constant repeating are we, in addition to hypnotically dulling our minds and hearts to what is good in lyrics, running the risk of the "vain repetitions" (King James) or the "babbling like pagans" (NIV) Jesus warns us of in Matthew 6?

Fourth, many churches now feature a screen up front serviced by an overhead projector. This does two good things. It helps one sing up and out into the sanctuary rather than down into a hymnal. And one does not need to purchase an expensive stack of hymnals, thus freeing money that can be spent elsewhere.

But there are also unpleasant sides to this. In order to make the words of the songs readable throughout the sanctuary, lettering has to be large. This, in turn, does not allow for music to be printed and so melodies and rhythms can only be retained by memory. But because some of the melodies are difficult and some of the rhythms syncopated, it often is difficult to manage this quickly, and then the singing part of worship can rapidly become a chore, a task to be performed. Further, those who like to sing harmony are reduced to singing along with the melodies—which often are too high, especially for male voices.

Finally, and probably as a result of the four points stated above, there is a constant fading out and renewing of songs. As with the popular love songs one hears on radio and video, in the top 10 for a number of weeks then to be replaced by other ones, by the time one finally has learned one, another one is taking its place.

Where's the musical leadership?

And so my question is simply this: is there through the denomination(s) any leadership provided to guide this kind of music?

Our preachers have enough to do having to be pastors, counselors, psychologists, youth workers and what have you. Many of them are overworked as it is and should not have to be burdened with that responsibility. Is it then the responsibility of the worship or music teams? Perhaps, but more often than not, these groups are made up of non-professional people who by virtue of their love of music, their willingness to serve the Lord and out of the goodness of their hearts, volunteer their time, including weekly practices, to be of service to God's people on Sundays. They, too, should not be expected to shoulder yet another burden. And so my question again: Are there guidelines available? If so, where? Or is it generally felt that the music set-up is fine the way it is and does not need to change?

Frank DeVries is a retired Christian school teacher and principal who lives in Nanaimo, B.C. He has written several Christian songs for children.

Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke



Lost & found

Life as a "directionally challenged" person is no walk in the park. Actually, if you're sending me on a walk in the park, you'd better include a compass, a detailed map and possible tracking device to aid in the police search likely to ensue.

Frankly, I don't think I'm the only one in this family who is prone to getting lost. There's nothing that strikes fear into the hearts of our children faster than when their father refuses to refer to a map and states smugly, "Don't worry. The nose knows!" However, I must admit to driving many miles on my own and in the process seeing many miles of road I never intended to see.

When I began travelling up to Harrison, Ontario, from the Niagara Peninsula, I was shown two distinct routes. The first time I drove back alone I managed to combine both routes and ended up on the outskirts of Toronto before I caught on to the mistake.

I have been lost in the city, lost in the country and lost in a large hotel while returning from the washroom to a conference room. Detours cause sheer chaos for me, and underground parking lots are a downright nightmare.

Out to lunch

One of my more harrowing experiences occurred when I accompanied my kids on their Grade 1 trip to the woods. We were to spend the morning in small groups gathering plants, berries, bugs, etc. Knowing my propensity to become disoriented, I paid careful attention to the position of the sun, the field where the bus was parked and the farmer who was busy ploughing in an adjacent field. I also planned to stay within visual range of another group, and hoped its leader knew the way back.

That worked for about 10 minutes. In any group of six children, there will always be one free spirit. This group was no exception. My little adventurer was particularly energetic, and suffered from selective hearing loss when her name was called. As a result, the rest of us just kept up with her. Eventually I noticed our group was all alone in the woods.

The sun was now overhead and I had no idea from which direction it had come. I listened for the farmer's tractor, but he must have gone home for lunch.

Sensing my uneasiness my young charges asked, "Are we lost?"

"Oh," I said, mustering a weak smile, "I wouldn't say that." And while anticipating their next question, I happened to catch sight of a bright red blaze of paint on a nearby tree. Grabbing my stray lamb by the hand, we proceeded with purposeful strides along the trail that had been marked for us by some unknown individual. What a relief to see that big yellow bus again!

Some people have an innate sense of direction, knowing exactly where they've been and where they're going next. I envy them. Others see getting lost as an opportunity for excitement. Personally, I'm not a risk-taker. My idea of high adventure is sticking the vacuum cleaner under my son's bed without looking first.

Never do I feel more vulnerable than on those occasions when I don't know where I am or how I got there. But I have learned some valuable lessons as a wayward woman. Experience has taught me that you can't always trust your intuition; things are not always as they appear, and (unfortunately) I am not as smart as I would like to believe. On the bright side—when I sing "Amazing Grace" I can relate with heartfelt gusto to "I once was lost, but now am found..."

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harrison, Ont., and enjoys writing.

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Arts/Media

Film on Video

A poignant look at the Russian spirit

A film maker follows his daughter for 13 years to the end of an era

Marian Van Til

Anna

Conceived, written and directed by Nikita Mikhalkov.

The Mikhalkov name has long been well-known in the world of literature (including that for children) and the arts in Russia/the Soviet Union. Nikita Mikhalkov is a film director who, though never expressing views so "extreme" that he was banished by the Soviets, was nevertheless one of the prominent resisters who occupied the Moscow "White House" on August 21-22, 1991, opposing Gorbachev's enemies as they attempted their coup.

While this film is a documentary it is also a captivating story, which, in the context of Mikhalkov's own family, acutely assesses the "Russian soul," the societal and spiritual impact of Soviet-style socialism/atheism, and observes the gradual supplanting of that socialistic/atheistic spirit with another.

Exchanging God for idols

Much of the early part of this 99-minute film had to be made surreptitiously. It is not only an important "historical document" but gives Westerners an intimate look inside Russia as the Soviet Union is beginning to crumble. (*Anna* is suitable for family viewing, but also makes an exceptional educational tool for both school and church.)

Mikhalkov focuses on his daughter Anna. Beginning in 1980 in the Breschnev era, when she is barely six years old, he asks five questions of her, which he repeats virtually yearly until she is almost 18: *What scares you the most? What do you want more than anything? What do you love more than anything? What do you hate more than anything? What do you want most of all?*

When he starts this project he, of course, does not know how it will turn out, or even exactly what he has in mind. But he had just finished a film called *Oblomov* about a boy, Illioucha, who lives in the late Russian (czarist) empire. So Mikhalkov thinks about juxtaposing his daughter's life in the Soviet "empire" with that of Illioucha. Would their lives and attitudes converge in any way? And what will he — and his film's viewers, whoever they might eventually be — learn about Russia in the process?

Ironically, Mikhalkov, though deeply rooted in a society that had long been atheistic, makes spiritual observations with a candor which would likely embarrass many Western film makers and media people. At the outset, he says of his society: "It had everything but God. Or rather, there were a whole series of petty living gods. But the people did not have a real God living within them."

The result, he says, is that those "petty gods" become demanding idols, and the country's leader is one of them. Mikhalkov intersperses his near-annual interviews of his daughter with footage (some of it seen nowhere else) of news events happening in the country at the time. He demonstrates that, though the Russian people have assimilated much ideology and many attitudes which the state has insisted they digest, yet in every-day lives, the singing and dancing and many ordinary things are as they have been for centuries. There are closet religious rituals as well, and we gradually realize that Mikhalkov is himself one of the countless secret Christians.

When one enters the Russian world outside of each person's (extended) family, Mikhalkov says, he or she "enters a world of tricks and imitation." People "cherish their own tiny part of the world," even as the Soviet Union as a whole "tries to appear great to the world."

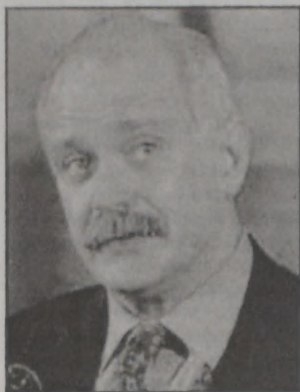
Typical kid, but not for long

Anna as a six-year-old has a typical child's imagination. Her biggest fear is "the witch" who has a "long nose and horrible face." What she wants most is a crocodile — a live one! Her biggest "hate" is borsch (doesn't every child have at least one food he or she abhors?).

By the very next year, her intellect has grown considerably. She now loves nature best; she hates "evil people"; she is scared of "fights"; and she wants most of all "to be intelligent, to behave well, to give good answers."

Her father is taken aback. "The fear of wrong answers — I know that so well," he says. And by implication, so does every Russian.

That year, 1981, 29 years after Stalin's death, Breschnev dies.



Nikita Mikhalkov: writer and director of *Anna*.

"While the whole country felt Stalin's death as a disaster (Mikhalkov was a child then), Breschnev's is seen as a conclusion. Who would come next? And what would he do?" Mikhalkov wonders.

What seems remarkable as the years pass is Anna's growing seriousness, her seemingly intuitive grasp, even as a child, of both world and Russian events — and even to some extent the spirits behind them.

Her family becomes the focal

point of her love and desires, and conflict — from family arguments to nuclear conflagration — her gravest concern.

We follow the Soviet Union through the post-Breschnev leaders, and then, finally to the new era of Gorbachev and "perestroika." Mikhalkov is convinced that Gorbachev was "sincere in his intentions, but didn't anticipate the results."

Anna, at 13, now sees a bright future; things are so much better, she believes. They can live as they want, do what they need to do. But, ironically, her father feels she is growing distant from him. Mikhalkov now muses, that despite this new age of freedom, "as usual, when the place of God is vacant in people's souls, a whole army of sirens appears to fill the void." (Sirens were mythological creatures who by their enchanting singing lured sailors to shipwreck.) He notes that, also ironically, "the higher Gorbachev's esteem rose in the rest of the world, the lower it fell in his own country."

When Anna is 18, the Yeltsin era has just begun and she, now an obviously thoughtful young woman, is on her way to Switzerland to study.

'God have mercy'

Mikhalkov comes back to comparing his daughter with the boy Illioucha. On the verge of leaving her homeland for a while, Anna cries when she tries to express her deep love for Russia. Would Illioucha have done the same? Mikhalkov says yes, and sees the convergence as a spiritual, mystical one, connected by God's "universal love."

Mikhalkov has, as the film ends in late 1991, apprehensive feelings about his country's future, now part of a society which has "lost respect for life and death, ... turned life into TV series and death into a computer game, and acquisition into destruction." The antidote is a cry for mercy: "Almighty God have mercy on me, protect me by your pure spirit..."

Much has happened in Russia since 1991. Viewers may well sigh with satisfaction when they hear Mikhalkov say that he now has "a new heroine," another little girl whose life he is following, and hopes to present her story — Russia's continuing story — at the end of another 13 years. That would bring us to 2004. I, for one, will eagerly await that new chapter in a very old but fascinating tale.

Mikhalkov mentioned as presidential candidate

Marian Van Til

MOSCOW — The South African *Financial Gazette* in its Feb. 4, 1999, edition quoted Russian sources as saying that film director Nikita Mikhalkov could become a leading player in Russia's presidential campaign next year if he chose to run.

"Mikhalkov's appearance in the campaign equation could seriously disrupt the political balance," the business daily *Kommersant* wrote in its lead front-page story. "He is fully capable of attracting great-power patriotism with his director's glory and thick moustache," said the paper. Sparking the latest speculation was an interview in London's *Sunday Times* in which the 53-year-old Mikhalkov said, "I am not seeking power over people, but I feel that if people really need and want me as president, then I would have to think seriously about it."

"In a country with few celebrities outside politics, Mikhalkov has won admiration for playing a variety of chismatic film roles as

an actor and earned further respect by gaining international praise as an actor and director in a difficult era for the Russian film industry," said *The Financial Gazette*.

During an era of deep cynicism about politics, Mikhalkov is said to project the image of a dapper, "real" Russian man above the fray. But some political analysts are sceptical of his chances. "He has never once appeared in the list of the 10 most popular candidates," pollster Nugzar Betaneli said by telephone. "It seems like it's easy just to declare that you're a presidential candidate, but it's a very complex goal."

Mikhalkov supported President Boris Yeltsin in his presidential run in 1996, but Yeltsin has been too ill to run again. The leading possible candidates include Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who would become president for three months if Yeltsin were incapacitated or died before the end of his term in mid-2000.

Others include Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, Communist Gen-

nady Zyuganov (who lost to Yeltsin in 1996), liberal Grigory Yavlinsky and regional governor Alexander Lebed. Oddly, Mikhalkov allowed his name to be on the list of candidates for the pro-government "Our Home is Russia" party in 1996, yet when he won a seat, he seemed to have second thoughts. He declined it, saying he had film obligations.

Several Russian newspapers have mentioned the support of prominent businessman Boris Berezovsky as one reason to take Mikhalkov's candidacy seriously. "According to the opinion of a series of analysts, it is completely realistic for Mikhalkov to count on coming in third in the presidential race," said the newspaper *Sevodayna*. "In addition, one cannot exclude that even before the vote the third-place winner would conclude a deal for the job of vice president or prime minister." Mikhalkov hasn't commented. His latest film, "The Barber of Siberia," just opened in the Kremlin.

Church

Tribunal investigates disappearances in Colombia

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — What can be done when a massacre is carried out in front of countless witnesses and one year later the killers have yet to be brought to justice? Nine prominent Canadians are part of a unique response, which began April 29 in Toronto, according to a report from the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA). The nine will serve as members of a tribunal that will conduct a public inquiry to establish the truth about a bloody massacre that took place in Colombia a year ago.

The tribunal was convened by the Canadian Council of Churches, and held public hearings in Toronto on April 30 and May 1. Members of the tribunal included Dr. Rosemary Brown (past chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and first black woman elected to the B.C. legislature); Chief Ted Moses (ambassador to the United Nations, Grand Council of the Crees); the Hon. Howard Pawley (former premier and attorney general of Manitoba); and Rev. William Ryan (chair of Canadian Jesuits

International and co-ordinator of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice).

The crime on trial in Toronto took place on May 16 and 17, 1998, in Colombia. According to ICCHRLA, 30 heavily armed men made a sweep through a poor neighborhood in the oil-producing city of Barrancabermeja, killing seven people and "disappearing" 25 others. Witnesses saw the victims being taken away, how one died, his throat slit by his captors, and heard the shots that killed other victims — more than 60 rounds that were fired within metres of a military base yet which brought no one out to investigate.

Killed with impunity

The leader of a paramilitary death squad subsequently acknowledged responsibility for killing all of the victims, telling a Colombian news magazine that the 25 who had been "disappeared" were later executed, their bodies disposed of and the Colombian government informed. However, not a single person has been convicted in this crime.

Faced with the failure of the

courts in Colombia to bring to justice those responsible — and given the fact that the Barrancabermeja massacre was one of 197 others which took place last year, in a country where impunity for politically-motivated killings is virtually 100 per cent — more than 300 Colombian organizations issued a call for international assistance to help end this impunity.

The Toronto tribunal was organized in response to that call.

One goal of the Toronto tribunal is to establish the facts of what happened one year ago in Barrancabermeja and whether Colombia's military and government bear any legal responsibility for the chain of events that led to the death of 32 civilians. Tribunal organizers also aim to raise public awareness in Canada, in the belief that

one of the worst human rights records in this hemisphere is not being adequately addressed by the international community because it continues to be largely shrouded by a veil of silence, says ICCHRLA.

On April 29 and 30 at the University of Toronto (Hart House), members of the tribunal heard first from prosecuting attorney Jeffery House, a Toronto criminal lawyer who travelled to Colombia to collect evidence and interview witnesses. Before the hearings, he told ICCHRLA, "I will present evidence to prove there was a tight connection between the paramilitary who carried out the massacre and members of the state security forces, who at the very least demonstrated willful blindness."

The tribunal also heard directly

from a number of eyewitnesses to the massacre who came to Toronto to testify, an act of courage given that witnesses who have testified in similar cases have later been killed. Expert witnesses from respected Colombian human rights organizations also appeared before the tribunal to present evidence of documented links between paramilitary death squads and Colombia's armed forces.

Members of the tribunal planned to publicly deliver their verdict at noon on May 1 in Moot Court of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. This verdict will be delivered to both the Colombian government and Prime Minister Chretien, in anticipation of Colombian President Andres Pastrana's visit to Canada beginning May 30.

Prisons must 'restore hearts': former inmate

(Religion Today) — Prisons should "restore the hearts" of criminals, says Patrick Nolan, president of Justice Fellowship, a subsidiary of Prison Fellowship Ministries which was begun by Charles Colson.

Prisons rightfully punish offenders, but wrongfully crush their spirits by removing all responsibility and the freedom to make

choices, and by failing to address underlying moral problems, he told Religion Today. "Where is redemption and restoration? Should we make them outcasts forever?"


Nolan "just sat there paralyzed" and stared at a restaurant's menu after his release from two years in prison, he said. "I hadn't made a decision in two years." Another man, a decorated war hero who

had spent 17 years in prison, ran out of a store crying because he "was completely overwhelmed" by "the bewildering choices."

There are better ways to handle criminals, Nolan says. "I suggest we put them in environments where they are strictly accountable and where they can be given moral and spiritual training. They need mentors. I want to see criminals change for the better."

Victims of crime and their families deserve justice, Nolan said. "The Bible is clear. The first priority should be to restore the victim." Justice Fellowship runs programs and promotes prison policies that hold offenders accountable to their victims and families, and to society. It tries to repair the harm done, and also facilitates discussions between victims and offenders.

Face-to-face meetings between criminals and victims sometimes produce dramatic results, Nolan said.



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Church

A safe person whom women trust

Marian Van Til

HAMILTON, Ont. — Rev. Al Dreise, executive director of Salem Christian Mental Health Association in Hamilton, Ont., was one of those who expressed his and his agency's concern to the Board of Trustees upon hearing about the proposed demise of the Abuse Prevention Office. He has sent a letter to the trustees, first of all "protesting the disbanding of the Pastoral Ministries Board" and calling that disbanding "a mistake."

Dreise and others at Salem have also worked closely with Beth Swagman in providing abuse awareness and training and in developing abuse prevention policies for various CRC congregations in southern Ontario. The Salem staff have led over 50 workshops, seminars and training sessions, many of which came about via referrals from Swagman.

The only one

In his letter Dreise said that Salem staff "experienced Swagman as an articulate spokesperson and advocate for many survivors/victims in the CRC." He pointed out to the Board of Trustees that Swagman "is perceived to be a 'safe' person whom women can trust to help them deal with the abuse allegations which they bring forward after many years of suffering in silences. She is, as far as we know, the only woman executive in the CRC who is able to give hope to abused women (emphasis Dreise's)." Dreise also asserted that "to merge this ministry with a predominantly male-staffed ministry will again silence those in our denomination who now have a voice or advocate."

He brought up a procedural question as well: "What is really puzzling is the fact that the Pastoral Ministries Board and/or Board of Trustees can wield such power as to undo a synod-created Abuse Prevention Ministry Office, together with its mandate, without due process."

In light of the Board of Trustees' current emphasis on decentralization and consultation with all regions of the denomination, Dreise asks: "Was a denomination-wide needs assessment and review conducted? Was the advice of church members [ar] abuse response teams in various regions... sought?" And "since the Pastoral Ministries Board did not, will the Board of Trustees consult with the 'grassroots' in all the regions of our denomination, or will it suc-



Rev. Al Dreise

cumb to an executive decision decreed in hierarchical form?"

Dreise said emphatically that "the latter has no place in Reformed church polity," asserting in the form of a rhetorical question that the CRC synod, the ecclesiastical assembly which created the abuse prevention ministry and appointed its first director, has the "ultimate and probably the only authority to terminate a ministry which it created."

Dreise noted that this means that synod protocol requires that delegates who come to this year's annual synod meeting beginning June 12 "should already have been informed of this major recommendation." But the Agenda for Synod 1999 "contains no hint as to what the Pastoral Ministries Board is now advising." Dreise ends his letter with the blunt assessment that "this decision is about power."

Research idea pleases

Whether from Dreise's message or some other impetus, the Board of Trustees has decided that this matter needs a formal review (under the direction of Peter Borgdorff's office). Borgdorff says he has asked the Calvin College Social Research Center to "do the core research, the formulation of questions, collating the data. We want to determine what the congregations need from the denomination, whether they need offices in these areas."

Rev. Peter Nicolai, Chairperson of the Canadian Ministries Board, is thankful that this "systematic" review will take place, and for the Calvin Social Research Center's involvement in it. "They do very good, independent work," he says. "That makes me hopeful."

Spring-break mission trips: are they worth it?

Spring break in Denver! Sounds lovely, doesn't it? Perhaps you're imagining beautiful scenery taken in on long hikes, or the sight of an eagle soaring above as you enjoy a cook-out in the Rocky Mountains.

I did see those things and enjoyed them, but they were not the reason I went. I spent spring break week in Denver with 26 high school students and eight adults from my church. We went to Denver for our annual spring-break mission trip.

Twenty-one hours of driving from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to Denver, a week of working in the inner city, and 21 hours back. Was it worth it? Are such trips worth the time, the expense, the hassle? Are they worth it for the pastor, especially, if that means leaving on the morning of Good Friday and completely missing Easter?

I say, as someone who has participated as both student and leader: Yes! Let me tell you why.

Monday morning my work team was assigned to work at St. Francis' Center, a day shelter for homeless people. We began with devotions, which included walking through the shelter parade-like as we sprinkled salt and sang a hymn. Then we were assigned to work in the laundry room, washing, drying and folding the many towels used by the men to take showers. With our rubber gloves on up to our elbows, we worked our way to the bottom of the pile.

While we worked, our team (three students and myself) talked about ministering to homeless people. We talked about the St. Francis shelter and how impressed we were with the staff. The students were particularly touched by a young man from the Czech Republic who had traveled the world by working in homeless shelters. He had worked in England, Scotland, and in the American cities of Minneapolis and Denver. The students thought that was a great idea, and each of them reflected on how they might be able to do that, or something like it, in their futures.

Deepening relationships

In just one day students were exposed to the realities of homelessness, and it also allowed them to see that they themselves could do this type of work, either as a volunteer or a staff person. "You know," one student said to me, "this makes me want to go back to Grand Rapids and volunteer there." It was only Monday and I was already delighted with what we had learned.

Such a trip not only teaches the students about

Chapter & Verse



Al Wolters
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

servanthood, volunteering, homelessness and poverty, but provides opportunities for students to deepen relationships with each other and with their leaders.

On Friday my team hooked up with another, we went to the Food Bank of the Rockies, where we washed and sorted cans. I spent the afternoon next to a student who has not been a regular participant in our youth group, but who, with his family, is a faithful church attendee. This young man has taken a great interest in punk rock, and has the haircut to go with it. As we stood side by side washing off cans of beans, I asked him about punk culture, and his views, and even his hair. We talked for hours, and we learned more about each other there in a food bank in Denver than we probably ever would have back home.

Shifted priorities

I think the highlight of the week for many of our travelers was the Thursday night barbecue and worship service on a mountainside overlooking the metropolis. As the sun set behind us, we watched the city where we worked all week light up at our feet. Each participant was given the opportunity to reflect on the week, talk about what he or she had learned, and explain how God had touched his or her life.

Many spoke of a shift in priorities, about a deeper concern for the poor, about a greater understanding of how God can use them to make a difference in someone's life. It was a powerful time, and even though we were shivering in the night mountain air while we stood there, we raised our hands together and sang a doxology praising God for the week.

Spring-break mission trips are so important for teaching Christian young people about other cultures, other people, other places. But they also teach our children about themselves, their friends, their leaders and their God.

Is that a week-long experience worth 42 hours in a van? You'd better believe it! I'm already looking forward to next year.

Mary S. Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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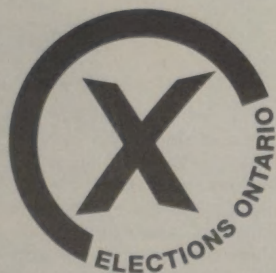
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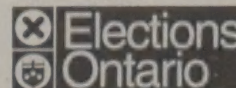
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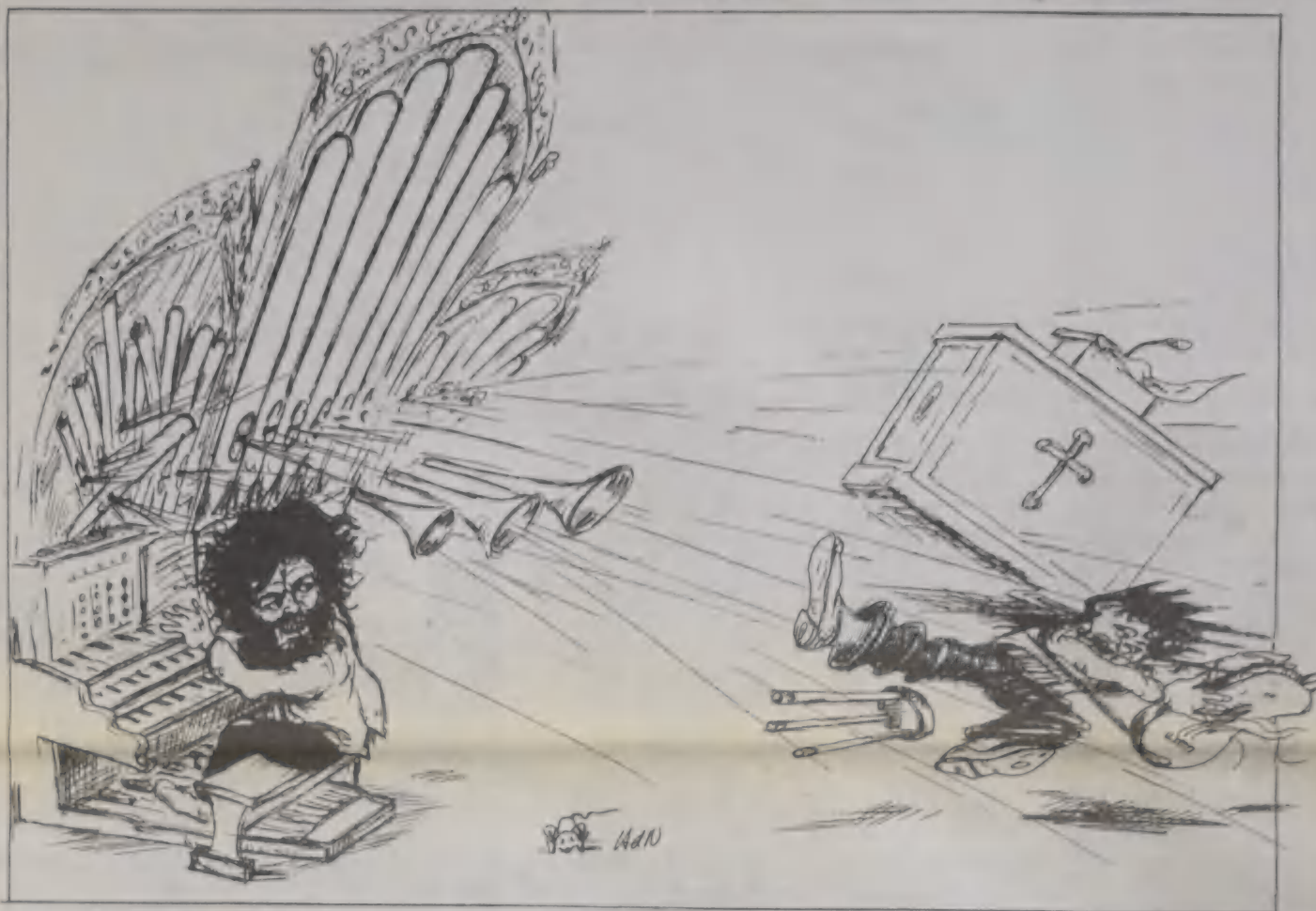


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B/37

Worship Wars

"Take that, you string-pickin' wimp!"



"We might even avoid worship wars when we experience the richness of new practices." — Jessie Schut

A lost fragment from Heroditus

Tony Vanden Ende

AND AFTER MANY DAYS of storm and despair, the seas calmed and we sighted land and made harbor. The land is low and flat, so that the inhabitants fear in time of storm. Indeed, the people spend their time building against the sea and talk of nothing else and call themselves by a strange name which cannot be spoken, but which in our language means "watch the sea" (or literally: "See Our Sea").

We went at once to the temple to give thanks to their god for our deliverance, and were there greeted by a servant who spoke to us the name of their god, which is Gudmourin. The High Priest next arose and uttered the sacred name in a loud voice, and all the great assembly murmured Gudmourin in reply. Now all the people rose as one and each man clasped the

right hand of his neighbor and shook it up and down many times and called upon the name of their god. For the people of the sea believe that in this manner Gudmourin may be waked from his slumber and made attentive to their prayers.

The People of the Sea do not worship in the same manner as is our custom. For they do not offer their thanksgiving and prayers in the first place. Rather, they set great store in announcing to each other the councils and meetings of the week to come, for this people loves nothing so much as a meeting of what they call "the committee." Thus are these meetings spoken of at great length by their chief priests so that none may miss them or escape from attending. For the wrath of their god is greatly kindled against all who neglect the meetings and fail to treat them with reverence.

AFTER THE PEOPLE have thus been reminded, the chief of priests never fails next to speak of the weather, for which he is always thankful. Neither hail nor rain nor snow nor sleet nor heat of sun can compel him to say other than, "On this cold and rainy morning, we are thankful to assemble..." And the People of the Sea agree with him, as their god is a weather god whom they wish to please, lest he send them weather which is worse than is their lot already to endure.

As to their chanting, this people greatly prefer a multitude of drums upon which they beat with great spirit. The drums are accompanied by other musicians and singers who tap one of their feet in a vague manner, sway in the fashion of our temple virgins, and nod their heads in the way of the chickens which they keep in great abundance. Each musician tries to outdo all others so that there is a

great noise and the voice of the people is not heard.

Nor can one escape the chanting of this people, for their music can be heard in their markets and in their schools and in their houses and in their places of rest. And it is a weariness to hear, for the beat never alters and the words, though oft repeated, cannot be understood by anyone except their god. For this people, like the pagans, believe that they will be heard for their many words.

THE HIGH PRIEST next begins an incantation and with many words casts a spell over all the people so that they cannot rouse themselves and they fall into a deep sleep. By this manner is the whole assembly made peaceful until the third hour of the watch when they are awakened by the last word of the High Priest.

At this, the People of the Sea reach for their purses from which they cast sums of money into large plates from the household of the

Chief Priests. For they fear the High Priest, lest his incantation should not come to an end and they never wake from the slumber into which he makes them to fall.

The people are then given a strong drink which refreshes them and casts off their weariness, and there is much merriness and greeting and clapping and shaking up and down of hands and calling upon the name of Gudmourin.

We remained with these People of the Sea for many days and went often to their temple. At length we sailed away without having sought the mercy of their god or giving him our thanks. For the People of the Sea do not set great store by these things.

Tony Vanden Ende lives near Cambridge, Ontario. He is not a minister in the Christian Reformed Church, nor a retired one, but a lawyer for Family and Children's Services. Heroditus was a Greek historian who lived in the fifth century BC.

Worship Wars

The virtue of liturgical discernment

John D. Witvliet

Near the opening of the book of Philippians, Paul records his prayer for the Philippian Christians. "And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine [italics mine] what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11).

We can't make discerning choices without knowing the options. Discerning people are always willing to give a person, a movement or a worship style a fair hearing.

At the heart of this prayer is Paul's desire that his readers will exercise the classical virtue of discernment. He wants them to be able to make good choices, to "determine what is best."

In doing so, Paul gives us the anatomy of this virtue. He points to three necessary building blocks for discernment: love, knowledge and insight. And he describes the desired result of exercising this gift: holiness and righteousness that will contribute to the glory and praise of God. In this way, the virtue of discernment energizes and empowers the thoughtful, mature Christian life.

Needed: discernment

In matters of worship, this is exactly the virtue Christians need today. We already have *passion* on the subject of worship. The charged rhetoric of the "worship wars" shows no signs of abating. In most congregations (in many denominations) there is no lack of opinions about worship matters, and no lack of willingness to share them.

We also have voluminous liturgical resources at our fingertips. Our bookstores, magazines and websites provide us with more songs, prayer texts and worship service outlines than have been available at any period in church history. Worship conferences have increased tenfold in the past 10 years. And even evangelical seminaries are finally offering courses on this central activity of church life.

But for all of this energy and all of these resources, we often lack the discernment to make good use of them. In fact, what we may need most is a healthy prayer of confession to admit our lack of discernment.

Not very pastoral

To help make such a prayer concrete, let me provide some examples of the lack of this virtue, drawn mostly from experiences described by my students at Calvin Theological Seminary, Tyndale Seminary and Northern Baptist Seminary.

In one congregation, a group protested the use of Scripture choruses because they simply repeated the same line 10 times over. The same group went on to ask their choir director to sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" (True, the Handel has more musical nuance and force than most of "Maranatha," but the naive use of this argument is still problematic.)

Conversely, in another congregation a worship leader protested the use of any written prayers because they were "so predictable." When the worship committee reviewed tapes of earlier services, they discovered that this worship leader had, however, "spontaneously" spoken the same, identical prayer in four consecutive services. The same worship leader, who had previously protested the overuse of a dozen traditional hymns, now lapsed into overuse of about a dozen choruses.

In another congregation, three church leaders proceeded to recommend and enforce wholesale liturgical change on the basis of attending one conference on worship and evangelism, without so much as one month's discussion and prayer with the congregation.

In another, a church council refused to adopt a proposal to celebrate communion more frequently because "it would cease to be special," an argument that (curiously) is not applied to preaching.

What we have here are situations in which committed Christians somehow lost their theological and pastoral equilibrium. They may have been advocating important and helpful positions, but they lacked the love, knowledge or insight to help their congregations discuss these issues in discerning ways.

Liturgical discernment

Discernment implies being open to examining any innovation or new practice. We can't make discerning choices without



Behind some of our recent liturgical skirmishes lie innovations driven by those who have ignored the community aspect of discernment.

knowing the options. Discerning people are always willing to give a person, a movement or a worship style a fair hearing. Discerning church musicians, for example, might have on their shelf music from Vineyard, Maranatha and Hosanna, as well as Taizé, Iona and the Hymn Society.

Yet discernment is not the same thing as a blanket endorsement. Indeed, discernment requires at least occasionally saying No — a difficult word to utter in our postmodern age. Discerning worship leaders know, for example, that cultivating a warm, hospitable tone in worship does not require comments that are glib or flippant. Discerning leaders will distinguish "warm" from "flippant" and then say a resounding No to the latter.

For this to work, as Paul suggests, discernment requires "knowledge and full insight." Worship leadership requires spiritual maturity and a desire to grow

in the knowledge and love of the Lord. The New Testament prerequisites for officebearers likely assumed that the function of those church leaders should be that of providing liturgical leadership as much as other sorts of leadership.

More than good intentions

Indeed, worship leadership requires more than good intentions. Like any other ministry or vocation within the church, it is a calling. Some people are given gifts by the Spirit for this ministry. It is our challenge to cultivate those gifts, and refine them for the building up of the church.

The growth of lay worship leaders has, arguably, been one of the most sweeping liturgical changes of the past century, across the spectrum of Christianity. This can be very good — a way for congregations to take "ownership" of worship, a way to express the "priesthood of all believers."

This works best when lay leaders are committed students of Scripture, when they are the kind of people who are eager to attend a worship conference or read a new book on worship. It doesn't work so well when leaders lack a taste for such things. In fact, many worship leaders can't name a single book on the theology of worship. Most denominations (admirably) require pastors/priests to pursue rigorous seminary studies before preaching. Yet we require of worship leaders only that they be willing to attend a single rehearsal or committee meeting. We would do well to lovingly challenge our worship leaders to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

'With love, all will be safe'

Further, as Paul reminds us, discernment requires love — in matters of worship, too. John Calvin agreed. When discussing whether Christians should kneel in

worship, for example, Calvin observed that some worship practices will inevitably change to accommodate to the culture of the age; he warned against rash, sudden and poorly reasoned change, and then concluded: "But love will best judge what may hurt or edify, and if we let love be our guide, all will be safe" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.X.30). Here Calvin portrays love in service of discernment.

Not that we need sentimental love in today's discussions. Today's discussions must begin with "tough love" that will seek worship practices that lead to the long-term health of the church. They require tender, empathic love that will take seriously the testimonies of fellow Christians about their own experiences of worship.

Communal involvement

Finally, discernment happens best in community. Paul prayed that "you [all] may determine what is best." Paul loved the second-person plural. He prayed for a community that would determine what is best.

Faithful lay-Christians are the backbone of church life. Most congregations/parishes are blessed with wise people who, often quietly, have the kind of spiritual discernment that could help churches make decisions based on something more than personal tastes. These are the voices that must be heard in our worship discussions.

But often they are not. Behind some of our recent liturgical skirmishes lie innovations driven by those who have ignored the community aspect of discernment. Occasionally, church leaders see these wise and discerning lay-people as simply hindrances to future growth. Some church-growth experts encourage church leaders to see these people that way.

True enough, these voices may be expressed without love and without knowledge, that is without the necessary ingredients in the recipe of discernment. But, when love and knowledge are expressed in community, then the church lives up to its identity as nothing less than the Body of Christ.

Now it may surprise you that I would write this article on worship without writing about worship *per se*, but about love, knowledge and community. I chose this strategy because of my growing conviction that many of today's discussions about worship are less about worship than about power, politics and personal taste. The antidote to this

is a loving, community-oriented search for wisdom. The antidote is praying for, cultivating and exercising the gift of discernment.

Discernment at work

What does this elusive alloy of openness and rigorous evaluation look like in real life? Consider the following examples of recent developments in several congregations.

One discerning leader openly studied the growth of "seeker services" and concluded that these public, evangelistic events have much to teach us about evangelism, but also that they are poor substitutes for services of Word and Sacrament. The result was a church with weekly services of Word and Sacrament, and regular evangelistic events that parishioners view not simply as a lighter version of a service, but as a powerful and deeply committed attempt to present the gospel to those who do not know the joy of the Christian faith.

One worship leader, fresh from a seminary course on worship, wanted to reinstate the observance of the Christian Liturgical Year in her congregation. Rather than starting by introducing what some of her church members would have seen as the more obscure elements of the Christian Year, she presented the calendar in the language of her people, as a "year-long spiritual journey with Jesus," and thereby focused on the theological significance of the Christian calendar.

One discerning church musician bought three volumes of recently published praise choruses as a sign of openness to this growing movement, and then carefully studied them to find the best 10 per cent of them, in much the same way as a hymnal committee carefully selects only the best 10 per cent of extant hymns for inclusion in a hymnal.

More examples

Another congregation wanted to celebrate Communion more frequently and decided to add celebrations of the Lord's Supper on all the main Christ-centred celebrations of the year (Christmas, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost) rather than on arbitrary days suggested by the calendar (as in the 2nd Sunday of every month). This led the congregation to see this change not primarily as the advancing of some sacramental "agenda," but rather as an attempt to provide for the most fitting, deeply biblical response to these key events in salva-

tion history.

One congregation sent representatives to two different conferences on church growth and worship. When they came back with a list of dozens of proposed changes, the congregation — rather than simply adopting all of the proposed innovations wholesale — began a process of prayer and discussion that led the whole congregation to become excited about some of the ideas, and to set others aside.

One congregation wanted to expand its musical repertoire — and its awareness of the *holy catholic church* — by incorporating songs from Africa, Southeast Asia and South America. Rather than singing these songs as musical adornments in "special" worship services, they incorporated one or two of these songs into nearly every service, as liturgical responses.

One congregation wanted to more fully involve its youth in worship. Rather than add a "youth service" once a year, they made a commitment to involve at least one young person as an usher, worship team member or Scripture reader each Sunday, and to provide regular training for youth to take up those roles.

One congregation wanted to add lay worship leaders. But it was decided to start not by adding a potentially divisive (in their context) worship team, but by forming a group of lay Scripture readers who



John D. Witvliet

would meet each week to rehearse the Scripture readings for the following Sunday. The result was thoughtful, appropriately dramatic renderings of Scripture in ways that led everyone in the congregation to look forward to that moment in the service.

One congregation added three teams of worship leaders, but wisely provided opportunities for training on the theology and practice of worship.

Means to a higher end

Here, then, are some congregations blessed with wise, pastoral leaders who are cultivating the gift of discernment. Here are people pursuing the love, knowledge and

community that will create an environment for making good decisions about worship.

The danger in all of our discussions about worship style is that we will become so focused on talking about worship that we will fail to actually do it. Worship is about the joyful and open listening to the proclamation of God's Word. It is the hungry feeding on the spiritual nourishment we receive from God in the Lord's Supper/Eucharist. It is about offering honest and exuberant praise to a holy, righteous and loving God. It is about honest confession and — often — lament. When our discussions of worship leave us with something less, we need discerning leaders to call us back to the heartfelt worship of a holy God.

In the end, the activity of discernment is a tool, a means to a higher end, a way of helping us become, through the Spirit's power, "pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God."

May we yearn for and cultivate this gift, and then see it bear fruit in worship that is God-honoring, Christ-centred and Spirit-inspired. *Soli deo gloria.*

John D. Witvliet is director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he teaches courses on worship, systematic theology and music.

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Worship Wars

Reflections on worship

Jessie Schut

What are your memories of worship? I'm sure we all have a box of worship pictures on our own interior shelves. The visual images I uncovered when I rummaged around in mine include the following childhood scenes:

Long sermons. As a little girl, I spent my time during this part of the service making up stories in my head, fantasizing about various people around me. I learned how not to listen.

Angry people. After a Dutch service a man angrily accosted the pastor, complaining about the melody change in a familiar psalm. His face was red, his voice strident. It was scary to me.

Clearly, worship is more than sitting and listening. It includes participation and dialogue, giving praise and receiving grace.

Correct ways of doing things, sitting quietly and reverently. A worshipper who raised his or her hands during a song or got excited about the Word was an embarrassment, or slightly suspect. We didn't do things like that in our church.

Robust singing. Often, singing was the best part of the service. But I wondered how people could sing with gusto and enjoyment. "I just to you so unbelieving I in judgment shall declare. 'You so long my spirit grieving never in my rest can share.'"

If worship is something you learn in childhood, I'm in trouble. Not that all my memories are bad. I enjoyed the fellowship, the singing, paging through my denomination's *Psalter Hymnal* and picking out my favourite hymns. Occasionally a minister would say something that caught my attention and made me think. But I don't have many memories of shining moments when I felt that I had been in God's presence.

The idea of what it really means to worship has intrigued me ever since I taught a fourth grade Sunday School class of six boys. I asked them, "What is worship?" and they responded unanimously, "Worship is sitting and listening." I knew what they meant. I'd been there, done that. I knew there had to be more, though, and I wanted to

learn more.

I'm not the only one. A survey conducted last year by the Evangelical Press Association and the Lily Foundation shows that churches' greatest interest is in worship (which makes sense). Publishing houses are churning out books, articles and sheet music as fast as they can, while church education material sales, the traditional forte of Christian publishers, are declining. Between January and April in Edmonton, Alberta, alone, four major worship conferences attracted hundreds of people.

Perhaps the current interest in and debate about worship is a corrective measure. Robert Webber, a prominent worship theologian (see facing page) believes that Christians in the Protestant tradition may know how to evangelize, and may know how to educate, but they really don't know how to worship very well.

Perhaps with the Reformation, the baby was thrown out with the bath water, replacing mystery, awe, and the senses with either intellectual knowledge (in the Reformed tradition), or emotions (in the evangelical tradition).

Historic roots

But now, finally, Protestant Christians are asking themselves all kinds of questions about worship, including the basic: "What is it?" And as they are asking these questions, they are learning from each other. People are digging into the Bible and into history books to learn about the historic roots of worship. They are attending different churches and experiencing new ways of worship.

We can learn about worship from the original source book, the Bible. Biblical words for worship in both Hebrew ("shachad") and Greek ("proskuneo") are active words with physical dimensions: to bow, prostrate, to turn toward and kiss.

In the early New Testament church, suggests Webber, there was much movement, singing, touching, and celebration, and communion was celebrated every week, because worship was seen as a celebration of God's mighty deeds of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Clearly, worship is more than sitting and listening. It includes bowing, prostrating oneself, turning toward, kissing, offering, responding, celebrating, praising... involving both our minds and our emotions, our bodies, our wills, our senses. It includes participa-

tion and dialogue, giving praise and receiving grace. My best memories of worship include many of these acts.

I now realize that corporate worship, with its emphasis on listening and learning from the Word of God (important as that was) is not all there is to worship. Perhaps one denomination can't accurately reflect all of the ways we can come before God. The various faith traditions can teach us how to involve more of ourselves in the act of worship, enriching our lives. We might even avoid worship wars when we experience the richness of new practices.

And, it also seems to me, we



The aesthetic instinct is moved by a sense of orderliness and beauty. Worship would include prayers that have stood the test of time.

need to acknowledge that because we are created differently, we will worship differently. Even Bible heroes show different ways of worship — Abraham walked and talked with God, while David danced with abandon before the ark and composed wonderful poetry. Paul's natural bent was intellectual, while John saw visions.

Six worship 'instincts'

In his book *Christ Followers in the Real World* author Gordon MacDonald suggests that people have different "leading instincts" in the way that they enter into God's presence. This God-created instinct is like a spiritual language we use to communicate with God. MacDonald identifies six of these.

1. The aesthetic instinct is moved by a sense of orderliness and beauty. Worship would include prayers that have stood the test of time, excellent music and services that invoke God's awesome greatness.

2. The experiential person, on the other hand, wants to feel the presence of God and respond with joy and abandon. The experiential person relies on the Holy Spirit to guide worship; such a person will express him- or herself through clapping, dancing, weeping and laughing.

3. The activist instinct worships best through doing something, whether it's working in a soup kitchen or on a political issue. The line between worship and work is indistinct, and he or she is energized by a vision of changing the world by a word-and-deed ministry.

4. Meanwhile, the contempla-

All of these instincts are attributes of God, and Jesus possessed all of them perfectly in a balanced way. MacDonald suggests that most of us will possess a natural inclination for two or three of these six instincts, but urges us to explore the others. "Maturity in faith comes as we become conversant in all six languages of worship, as Christ was," he says.

We all have individual memories of times when we experienced the presence of God and instinctively worshipped him in a way that felt right. Yet when it comes to corporate worship within the church, we have pretty definite ideas of what's right and what's wrong, based on our own instincts. When we want our corporate worship to reflect only our own instinctive style, we're limiting worship for others and denying their need to worship in the way God created them to be.

I'm thankful I have other memories of worship, more uplifting than the negative ones I've already listed.

I'm a little girl of four or five, singing in church. I know this song. I've sung it with my mom! "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his voice, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice." I sing along as loud as I can, thrilled that I'm part of this crowd of suit pants and swishy dresses standing around me.

I'm at a retreat. We stand in a circle and sing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Spontaneously, we hold hands and raise them to heaven as we sing. I feel as though we're reaching up and God is reaching down, and we're not very far apart.

And I have a recent memory, when I'm at an impasse in an important writing project, where the words have to be just right. I pace through the house, trying to dredge up the ideas. Nothing seems right. Then I retreat to the living room and sit quietly. "Yielded and still," in the words of a familiar hymn. Suddenly, I am filled with the realization that the words I'm looking for aren't important, the project is n't important. Only God is. Unless God is my all in all, there's nothing. I rest and rejoice in him. I was looking for words, and met, instead, the Word.

Jessie Schut is a freelance writer, and a regional reporter for *Christian Courier*. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta.

tive person worships best in the quietness of his or her inner life. Praying is a two-way street, and the spiritual disciplines are important ways of connecting with God. The contemplative person will sometimes wish everyone in church, including the minister, would just be quiet so he can commune with God.

5. The student instinct is always on a quest for truth. Worship for the student is most profound when he or she is engaged in searching the scriptures, and is moved by new insights and ideas that relate to truths.

6. Persons who worship God best through their relational instinct place a high value on love and fellowship in the body of believers. They worship God best when they are in harmony with the rest of the worshippers. When barriers of misunderstanding break down between believers, the relational person feels he is seeing God at work in the world.

Worship Wars

Conference helps churches to renew worship

Jessie Schut

Robert Webber, who could be called the "high priest of blended worship," practices what he preaches. He describes the style of worship in the church he attends, St. Mark's Episcopal, as "high liturgical evangelical charismatic sacramental" worship.

The man who has made his life a mission to renew worship has travelled the continent for most of his career. He came to Alberta one weekend in April, hundreds of people from all kinds of denominations — high liturgical, evangelical, charismatic, sacramental, and more — came to listen and learn.

Webber's interesting past contributes greatly to his credibility. His parents were Baptist missionaries in Africa. He received his education in four conservative institutions: Bob Jones University, Reformed Episcopal Seminary, Covenant Seminary (Presbyterian) and Concordia Seminary (Lutheran). He's been teaching at Wheaton College, perhaps the foremost evangelical college in the United States, for many years.

With exposure to many traditions, his own personal experiences and his passion for worship, Webber is highly esteemed in the world of worship theology. His workshops give an overview of the history of worship, show what "renewed worship" looks like, and inspire and equip worship leaders to bring the message home to their local congregations.

A keen observer and student of worship, Webber believes that we need to go back to the basic question: what is it? In his own quest to define and understand worship, he concludes that it is a "vast and mysterious subject that demands a lifetime of attention. Worship, like



Robert Webber

God, is a mystery that can never be exhausted." However, his own definition is, "Worship is a celebration of God's mighty deed of salvation in Jesus Christ."

This definition includes two things: God's speaking and acting to us in proclamation and sacrament, and our response with praise and worship. Thus worship is a dialogue that requires our full participation. Webber points out that there are three issues to consider in worship renewal: content, structure, and style.

An event and a hope

The content of worship is rooted in an event and a hope. For the ancient Hebrews, worship centred around the Exodus, where God stepped in with his saving grace. For Christians, that event is the Resurrection. Both of these events offer hope to believers, and invite unbelievers to accept this event for their own lives.

The structure of worship is fourfold: the entrance to worship (consisting of praise and worship to God for who he is), the service of the Word (God proclaiming his saving deeds), the service of the table/altar — Supper/Eucharist —

where we remember, give thanks and affirm our commitment, and dismissal, where we are sent forth to serve. For those churches that do not celebrate Communion every week, Webber suggests response through prayer, testimonials, singing, and acts of dedication.

The definition, content, and structure of worship are concepts that most people, whatever denomination, can understand and accept. Style of worship, however, is another matter altogether. Worship wars erupt about how we put these concepts into practice.

Reconsidering 'style'

Webber challenges people to reconsider style of worship in light of whether it effectively brings God's message to people today. All through history, worship has changed with the times. Today, people are looking not for reason, observation and individualism, he says, but for mystery, experience, and community.

The reality of life in a world that's not getting better and better has given worshippers a longing to be touched by a God of mystery and greatness. The reality of life in a world that is visual and sensual has given worshippers a need to experience rather than know. And the reality of life in an alienated world where relationships are fleeting has given worshippers a need for community. And our style of worship will influence whether we reach these needs and longings.

One key to effective worship is participation. Worship is a verb, he says. It demands action. It may mean using the body, which was very important in Hebrew times. For instance, the praise word *yadah*, used 90 times in the Bible, means "to worship with extended hands, to throw out the hands, to give thanks to God," writes Barry Liesch in *The New Worship*. With so many mentions of it in the Bible, worship involving the body must be as meaningful as verbal proclamation. Liesch concludes:

More and more, Webber is seeing a blending of worship styles, where old and new, traditional and charismatic converge to enrich and revitalize worship. Pentecostals may be using liturgies and vestments, and Anglicans will sing praise and worship songs. The most important thing is that worship, a dialogue between God and his people, is a "source of personal change as we who worship find ourselves touched by God's transforming power."



Webber with conference participants

Signs that your church needs worship renewal

1. The congregation is passive and lacking in enthusiasm and in spirit of joy.
2. Visitors do not feel welcome or drawn into the community and its worship.
3. Worship is cerebral and oriented almost exclusively toward teaching.
4. Worship is evangelistic and oriented almost exclusively toward conversion.
5. Communication skills in preaching and leading worship are weak.
6. Sermons tend to be long, didactic and lacking in application.
7. Communion is celebrated infrequently and when celebrated seems to be tacked on to the end of the service, often bearing the characteristics of a funeral.
8. People sit in a typical classroom formation with the back of another person's head as a major object of sight.
9. Singing lacks life and the range of music is limited.
10. There is no sense in which the order of worship moves the congregation in a pattern that rehearses their faith and thus establishes, maintains, or repairs a relationship with God.
11. The Christian year is not practised, or if it is practised, it is not characterized by a sense of its gospel nature or used effectively as a means of ordering congregational spirituality.
12. The use of the arts is shunned, except on special occasions such as Christmas or Easter.
13. The people are not involved in responses, antiphons, prayer, ministry to each other or the passing of the peace.
14. The senses are not adequately engaged in touch, smell, sight or hearing.

Adapted from a questionnaire in *Renew Your Worship: A Study in the Blending of Traditional and Contemporary Worship* by Robert E. Webber. For more information, contact Institute for Worship Studies, Box 894, Wheaton, Illinois 60187; telephone: 630-510-8905.



Pastors John Pasma (Edmonton) and Phil Stel (Rocky Mountain House).

Worship Wars

Cowboys at the burning bush

Jan de Bree

Gerrit Folkers sat down beside his wife in the same pew where they sat each Sunday. The "praise team" at the front of the sanctuary consisted of two married couples who led the singing. They were a dissonant group because the women wore dresses, jewelry, nylon and quality shoes. Their hair was meticulously groomed. However their husbands — one was Gerrit's son, Gerry — wore blue denim jeans, vinyl running shoes and plaid shirts, open at the collar exposing their white undershirts as if they had hurriedly left work for church. They stood next to their wives as mere appendages while the women took the lead. They chose the mellow, repetitive Scripture choruses, the "just want to praise you, Lord" type of song.

This style of music was difficult to describe. It was not rock and roll and appealed to people between 20 to 40 years old, but not to all of them, and not to people over 60. The music sounded similar to a Broadway musical and a romantic movie theme. On other occasions it was elevator music, definitely sentimental, which was probably good for constrained and dour Calvinists, in small doses, of course. However, after 15 years of praise songs, monotony had arrived.

One expected a loud cry to arise from the pews. "We are Reformed and should always be reforming." Somewhere in that church there had to be one person who wanted to dispose of the overhead projector and those repetitive hymns in which the rhythm of the music and the cadences of the words did not match. One expected a protestation after years of those undulating, sappy melodies and an uprising in which an iconoclast would trash the glaring overhead projector. Or at least the iconoclast would hide the projector in his (or her) woodshed.

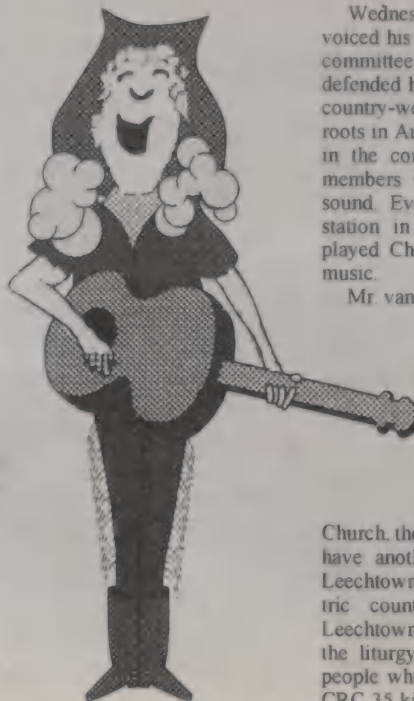
But no one said much of anything. People simply grumbled

among themselves. Occasionally a brave soul complained to an elder on a home visit. Nothing came of it. No one wanted to hurt the feelings of those well meaning folks who led the singing on Sunday mornings.

Gerrit Folkers was discouraged. He wanted a better balance between the liturgical traditions, and he wanted his son, Gerry, to dress in a suit and tie. When he saw the praise team, he looked sadly upon his son who still wore blue jeans and running shoes to church. He never mentioned it to Gerry. He kept his wish a secret. Yet recently he had noticed that the young men like his son came to church in suits and ties soon after their fathers had died. Gerrit saw a glimmer of hope. After his death there was a good chance that Gerry would wear a suit and tie to church. These young men were holding out against their fathers, still rebellious at age 30 and 40. Then it struck him: the liturgy, like the young men, would change after the death of his generation. Maybe then the hymns and psalms in the hymnal and the pipe organ, would be rediscovered.

The following week it was the first Sunday in spring. The lively parishioners drifted into church, conversing as they passed through the front doors and as they sat down in their pews. Gerrit noticed that the conversations were louder than on the rainy days of winter. The praise team at the front of the church had to make a commotion to attract attention. When the parishioners directed their attention to the praise team, they were surprised to see that Mrs. Verboer wore cowboy boots. Never before had she worn them. Nor had anyone else worn cowboy boots to church. This was not cattle country.

Mrs. Verboer seemed out of place next to Mrs. Hoekstra and Mrs. Davis who wore low cut dress



shoes. But that did not deter her from announcing the opening hymn, "Shall we gather at the River." To the astonishment of the congregation, she whined into the microphone with the nasal twang of a country-western singer. Several parishioners, appearing confused, looked to the praise team for clarification and direction. Did the praise team expect the congregation to replicate a country-western sound?

Not a hint came from the team and the confused members stopped singing. The remainder of the congregation sang along sheepishly, while Mrs. Verboer wailed into the microphone. She sustained her "hurtin' music" sound as if she were on stage at a rodeo.

As the appointed elder to the worship committee Gerrit was in a quandary. He disliked country-western music. Now Mrs. Verboer had introduced cowboy culture into the church, including the boots. It felt like an invasion from the world of popular music into his sacred realm of faith. Should he complain? Was Mrs. Verboer behaving inappropriately when she sang like a cowgirl? Was she forcing her musical preferences on the congregation? All through the service Gerrit pondered these questions. By the closing amen he had decided to discuss this with the worship committee.

Wednesday evening Gerrit voiced his concern at the worship committee meeting. Mrs. Verboer defended herself. She argued that country-western music had its roots in American hymns and that in the congregation were many members who liked the C-W sound. Even the Christian radio station in Lynden, Washington, played Christian country-western music.

Mr. van Harmelen objected. He emphasized decorum, and promoted the work of J.S. Bach. He pointed out that the Victoria Christian Reformed

between Cain, who worked the soil and Abel, who kept flocks. In the Bible God favored those who kept flocks. Gerrit was apprehensive. He was a farmer who worked the soil. Did God then favor Mrs. Verboer who was fond of cowboys? Gerrit did not want to walk in Cain's shoes.

In the worship committee Gerrit had only the support of the organist. After the show of strength by the cowboys, Gerrit knew he had to gather reinforcements elsewhere. He spoke to the pastor about his conflict with Mrs. Verboer. Gerrit explained that he expected another Sunday service of cowboy boots and the country-western sound. Pastor Kerkhoven nodded and said, "Leave it with me."

The cowboys and cowgirls wore their boots again on Sunday morning. Mrs. Verboer led the singing for the third Sunday in a row. Elder Kuyper escorted pastor Kerkhoven to the front of the church. Kuyper wore cowboy boots. However pastor Kerkhoven wore sandals. Outside it was sunny and warm but not that warm.

When he had to deliver his sermon, pastor Kerkhoven read an odd conglomeration of Bible passages related to feet. His main text was Exodus chapter three. The title of the sermon was, "Take off your shoes. You're on holy ground."

He talked about Moses who removed his sandals in the presence of God at the burning bush. Respect and humility were mentioned in the context of footwear. Feet were deemed important. He quoted first Corinthians chapter twelve verse twenty-one. "And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you.'" He admonished the congregation to pay attention to their feet. He closed his sermon with a reading of Matthew eighteen, verse eight. "If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away." Then he reached down and removed his sandals. From behind the pulpit he brought out his regular Sunday shoes and put them on.

After he tied his shoelaces, he announced the closing hymn. The baffled congregation sang, "Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee."

A week later no one wore cowboy boots to church. And Gerrit's son, Gerry, wore dressier shoes.

Church, those citified folks, would have another reason to see the Leechtown congregation as eccentric country bumpkins should Leechtown have cowboy music in the liturgy. (In Leechtown were people who attended the Victoria CRC 35 kilometers away because the Leechtown congregation still concluded the worship service with the singing of the threefold amen.) Gerrit observed that the congregation had no cattle ranchers or equestrians, mostly dairy farmers. Not a single soul owned a horse or a saddle.

Gerrit knew that he had not convinced Mrs. Verboer to stop behaving like a country-western singer. Secretly he devised a plan. He would speak with the person in the sound booth and ask him to turn off Mrs. Verboer's microphone when she sang.

That Sunday Gerrit Folkers approached Tom in the sound booth. Tom greeted Gerrit and Gerrit greeted Tom. After the brief encounter Gerrit turned nervously away. He knew that it was impossible to ask Tom to turn off Mrs. Verboer's microphone when he saw that Tom, too, wore cowboy boots. On a closer examination of the congregation he saw more than a dozen people wearing cowboy boots. And Mrs. Verboer again stood at the front of the church as song leader outfitted in an Annie Oakley dress and cowboy boots. She had the congregation sing a number of revival hymns like "There's Power in the Blood." Those were the hymns that lent themselves well to the nasal twang of country music.

Gerrit saw the ancient battle lines being drawn again between sod busters and cattle farmers. This was the same battle that raged

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Jan De Bree is a freelance writer living in Duncan, B.C.

Worship Wars

The songbook contest

James C. Dekker

For at least 15 years or so, "worship wars" have flared in many North American Protestant churches (and in a slightly different way, the Catholic Church, too). Worship committees, council members, pastors and musicians tangled about what fits in and what doesn't. Styles and content of songs, choices of instruments, to dance liturgically or to use teaching devices such as overhead projectors and slides—all have become heavy arms in the wars. One often untried tactic in "worship wars" is to take them somewhat less seriously, that help bring peace, reminding ourselves that even the writers, guided by the Holy Spirit, remained fully human? Maybe they were fully capable of disagreeing in their time and place about worship too.

So in a culture often dedicated to "left brain" activity, engage your "right brain" as you read a recently discovered and freely translated verbatim of a meeting of the Central Jerusalem Worship Committee. Watch the members around their table from the distance of time and with the permission of humor as we eavesdrop in mid-agenda—while we take ourselves less seriously, praying to treat each other more respectfully and worshipping God withal.

Jonadab: As usual, Sarah, you've done an excellent job of finding the resources for the Sabbath school program at the end of Passover. That was really a nice touch with matzoh and lamb meat for everybody. Thanks a lot.

Sarah: Not to mention it. It's what I do.

Harim: I did want to quibble a bit about that inclusiveness. Don't you think that the children were maybe a bit too young to grasp the significance of that meal?

Sarah: I suppose there's all sorts of ways that could be misunderstood, but it's a little late to dig it up now. Our full committee discussed this thing nearly to death about four months ago and then decided to give it a try. We even made informative announcements in worship and on street corners, inviting everybody to take part. We encouraged parents to tell their children about the history and the meaning. We even asked King David to announce publicly that this was a full committee decision.

Jonadab: Okay, Sarah. Don't get too steamed up about this again. We've been through this one before. And you, Harim, I know you voted against that lamb and matzoh object lesson. That's your privilege. But you didn't record your vote, so you're fishing behind the net on this one. It's better for everybody if you stow it now. It's part of loyalty and community, you know.

Speaking of the King, I think that's he knocking at the door. You'll remember we asked him to come to talk a bit about developing a new, official songbook.

Harim: Welcome, your Royal Highness.

David: Please, let's not stand on formalities. I tie my belt just like you do, Harim. Call me Dave, at most Prince, but none of this "Royal Highness" business. Okay?

Jonadab: Well, yes, then, uh... Dave. We've been on this songbook development project for quite a while. We know you're deeply committed to this. I mean, we did sponsor a public song-writing contest to put together 150 songs. I know you're capable and eager, but, Dave, couldn't you give us a break? Look—you've submitted more than 70 songs so far. Give other poets and musicians a chance.

David: What can I say? It's what I do.

Sarah: And to some excess, I say, Dave.

Jonadab: Hold it again, Sarah. Please, a little more respect.

David: That's all right. People get passionate about these things. It's quite natural and fitting when we're talking about emotions and convictions.

Harim: Which is precisely what you write and sing about a lot, your Roy... I mean, Dave—maybe to excess.

David: As I was saying, people get passionate—like you are this minute, Harim. Maybe you could explain a bit about what you mean.

Harim: You bring everything, absolutely everything into your songs. They're so extreme, no balance, just your whole life, out there on your sleeve for everybody to see. Like this one: "Have mercy on me, O God... for I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me." Nothing wrong with that sort of expression in private. But look, these are songs for public worship. I'd be ashamed to put everything on display and I think you ought to exercise a little more judgment and prudence

about subject matter.

Jochebed: Harim, I couldn't disagree with you more. The King—Dave here—is modelling honesty and repentance. He's not boasting. Far from being excessive, there's depth of spirit. The only way to experience and communicate the forgiveness he craves here is to go into some detail.

Harim: I don't like it. I feel gritty just reading the first part, to

let's have some decorum, please. I mean, prancing about practically naked? You call that reverent?

Jochebed: Brother, your wife Michal really had something to say about that one, by the way.

David: Well, now, some things are private. Give that one a rest, OK. And no, I don't really call that reverent, Harim—if you mean solemn and self-contained. But I do call it worship. And evidently God

lessly. "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His mercy endures forever." Without getting personal, Prince, that's just a lot of repetition, monotonous.

David: Well, Sarah, you slipped up on that one. I didn't even have a hand in that song. I did pass it on—hearty. And that's because it involves the whole community in this nation, all the people who come together to worship. They're not there as spectators. They can take part actively. And it looks to me like that repeating refrain "His love endures forever" is supposed to remind the people precisely of God's endless, repeating love. No, not monotonous, not mindless—but reaching into individuals' hearts and a community's soul.

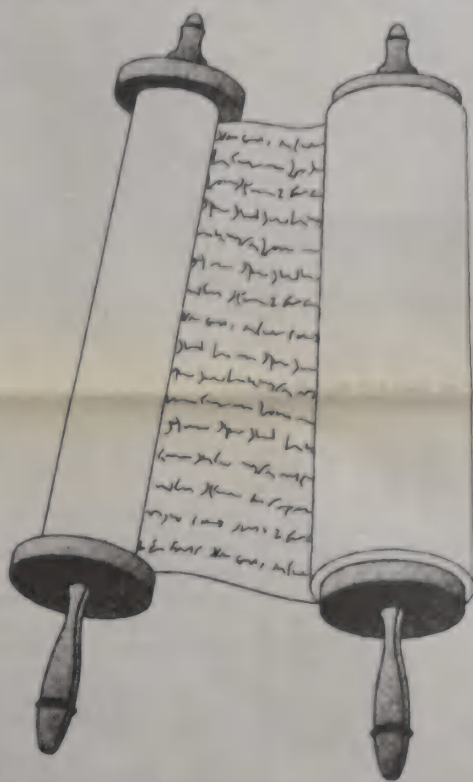
Look, I don't want to get bogged down in the details of every song. What about their overall scheme and presentation? I do intend to express as much soul-aching or soul-healing emotion as possible. The Lord has healed and continues to heal my own damaged life. Though I don't think anyone should ever think of copying me, it's fitting to say, sing and play in as many ways as possible some of the things the Creator and God of all does. Not everyone has to like it. But God made us in so many different ways. Everybody has to express that—in song, poetry, with instruments...

Jonadab: Dave, you're starting to ramble. It's important to stick to our subject or we'll be here until the Feast of Tabernacles. But so long as you bring it up, we should probably look at that last song someone entered in the songbook context—that one about praising God with trumpets, harp, lyre, tambourines, dancing, strings, flutes, cymbals. I don't know about that.

For you, though, Dave, I think it'd be a good idea to stay away from the harp. Once I heard someone took so poorly to your playing that he almost killed you. But what I really want to know about this psalm is, what's next? Drums in worship?

Sarah: you've had your hand up for a while. Go ahead...

James C. Dekker is pastor of Hope Christian Reformed Church, Thunder Bay, Ontario. He has served on worship committees in five nations in two languages, endured much repetition and committed a bit himself. His family plays stringed instruments—often in church. For the good of all James sticks to playing cassettes and CDs.



The new Jerusalem songbook.

say nothing of what happens when I heard you sing it.

David: Like what, for example?

Harim: When you sang that for us the first time, I got a lump in my throat so big I couldn't even protest then, even though I thought I should.

Sarah: You're protesting now just fine. So! You do have feelings, I'd never have guessed.

Jonadab: Sarah, that's twice! Harim has a point, Dave. Sometimes it does seem like your emotions control you—and not you your emotions—and I don't mean only in most of the songs you submitted to our little contest.

Harim: Take, for example, the time you were bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. Sure, that was an exciting time, but

didn't object; he hasn't reprimanded me about it.

Jochebed: Sorry about that—I mean it. It won't happen again. But I'd like to return to your songs, since this songbook is our main point. I don't usually mind the emotion; it fits often for this mystery of how God works in us.

But some of your songs are really not up to snuff. Take that shortest ditty you submitted. Grandiose, it is: "Praise the Lord, all you nations, extol him all you peoples." Isn't that a bit much for such a short thing? Not much thought put into that—just feeling with little motivation. Fluff, really.

Sarah: Jochebed's saying something we've all thought, Jonadab. Not only is this particular song short and shallow, what about that song that goes on and on end-

Feature

A farewell to a peaceful life:

The story of Eva Bross (1913-1989)

Dr. Remkes Kooistra

During the time that I worked as a chaplain at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, I became involved in a study of the Holocaust. This project led me to interview a number of Jewish concentration camp survivors, most of whom originally came from Poland. One of these survivors was Eva Bross. This is her story, which she told me one cold November night in 1988, about one year before her death. The conversation was lively. I will let her tell her story as recorded on tape.

My name is Eva Bross, or rather, that is my married name. When I was born in Warsaw, Poland, my birth name was Emma Grimsberg. I was born on the 5th of May, 1913, my parents' only child. The first 27 years of my life were quite normal. My education was considered to be completed

with my graduation from high school. My father made his living in the wheat trade, buying and selling grain.

I know that you will also want to know something about the nature and quality of our religious life. Well, we were Jewish, but not very orthodox. Like many other

Jews in Poland, we observed all the major Jewish holidays. We ate kosher food and on the Sabbath we usually went to *Shul*, the synagogue. Yet our religious life was more ritual than a matter of inner spirituality.

I got married in my early 20s, according to our tradition. My first husband had a good-paying job in a factory, and he earned enough for us to live our sheltered lives in quiet happiness.

The end of all that was beautiful

But all this changed suddenly and dramatically when the war came. In September 1939 the

"I often wonder: who is God? What did he do when I was in the camps? He is supposed to know everything that happens. Why did he not help us? I lost everything."

Nazis marched into Warsaw and that was the end of our easy-going, peaceful lives. By that time, we had two children, a girl of about three and a boy just a few months old.

Soon we were forced to live in the ghetto which the Germans created. Not much later we began to suffer from starvation. The first one of us to die because of lack of food was our baby boy.

Then one night, my husband, who had left the house to look for some food (something he often did), was discovered by a German soldier and shot dead on the spot.

As the war went on, we were no longer allowed to stay in the Warsaw ghetto. With my little daughter, I was transported to my first concentration camp, Majdanek, as was my friend Rose Kay and many others from Warsaw.

I had been there for only about three weeks when my little girl also died. Now I was all alone. I had lost all I had, all those who had made life beautiful and worth living. Yet somehow, life went on. I went from camp to camp. After Majdanek came Lublin, Sobibor, Thesbush, Behova and finally Bergen-Belsen. There I was liberated in 1945 by the British army.



Concentration camp survivor Eva Bross: 1913 - 1989

I could have stayed in Behova to be liberated by the Russians. But I thought, "Where am I to go in that big country of Russia? I have nobody there. What to do? Where to go? Does it make any difference where I go? I may as well go along with others on the train to Bergen-Belsen, which is closer to the West."

And that is what I did. I was not sure whether it was the right thing to do or not, and I did not care much about it either.

Freedom, but more sorrow

Soon I found myself working for the English. I was then 32 years old and I knew that my life had to go on. I met a man named David Bross, he asked me to marry him and I accepted. He was also Polish, also a Jew, and also a survivor. Soon after our marriage we moved to Canada.

With the help of one of our

cousins we were able to rent a bakery, since David was a baker. But even this was not going to last very long. David died in 1952, and since that time I have again been a widow. This is what I have been now for 36 years, a widow.

One bright spot in this dismal story of mine is that we became the parents of one child, a boy. He did very well. He became a teacher and married a fine Jewish girl who became a medical doctor. And she is not just an M.D., she has also a doctorate in pharmacology. They have three beautiful children. So this is what I have: a son, a daughter-in-law and three lovely grandchildren.

A living corpse

Now you want to know more about my life in the camps. It was rough, tough, and we all suffered. We did not get enough to eat, often we could not sleep, and we did not have the right clothes.

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Corpses in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where Eva Bross suffered until 1945

In the winter they gave us summer clothes and in the summer we got winter clothes; men got women's clothes and women were dressed in men's clothes. We got one tiny little piece of bread at a time, with watery soup. In the meantime we were expected to work hard in the ammunition factories. This went on in most of the camps till, finally, in Bergen-Belsen I got sick. I got typhus, and with it, diarrhea, my weight went down to 90 pounds.

Yet I just lived on, from one day to the next. Sometimes I thought, "I should pray," and sometimes, "I am going to die." But usually I did not think at all. I was numb, walking in a daze, as if heavily drugged. I was there, yet I was not there. I saw nothing, and yet I saw much. I heard nothing, and yet I heard a lot. I did not think any more, I did not hope any more, I was like a living corpse.

Anything that is bad happened to me. Name it and I got it. I had lost my last dear ones, my husband, my son and my daughter. I was beaten and starved. I had to work hard. I knew that if I could not keep up, they would shoot me. They gave me a bundle of stuff and with it I had to walk back and forth, back and forth, all the day long, every day.

When you are hungry, you cannot sleep. When you are cold, you cannot sleep. Yet I knew I could not complain or protest. If I would

do that I would lose even that little piece of bread. So on I went. On and on.

At six o'clock they would wake us up for the roll call. The guards had to count us and they counted us over and over again, up to 10 or 20 times. Of course, nobody was missing. Where could we go? And this roll call went on twice a day. In the winter it was terrible. But if you did not show up, you would be found and killed. In any case, I often wished that I were dead.

I had both male and female guards. They should all [still] be killed, as they tried to kill us. Many of them are now in hiding, but there must be plenty of them still around. They all should be brought to justice.

Happiness in the next generation

Everything went very well with our new life in Canada and with the bakery until 1952, when, as I said, my second husband died in our 7th year of marriage. At first I tried to keep the bakery going, but after a while I sold the business. I said to myself, "This is enough for me."

I started doing some needlepoint work, which I really enjoyed. I also became a volunteer at a hospital. Having suffered much, I tried to give some help, and perhaps some comfort, to other sufferers.

And I also like very much to visit my son and daughter-in-law,

and I enjoy especially my three grandchildren. Seeing them, I know I am not alone and my life was not in vain. Usually they come to my home for *Yom Kippur* and for some other holidays. Then we go together to *Shul*. We are having a good time. My grandchildren go to a Jewish school in Toronto. You

see, my daughter-in-law is very religious. I am not very orthodox. I go to *Shul*, but not every Sabbath. For me it is just a tradition I am observing, for after all, I am still a Jewish person. I eat kosher food and keep the Sabbath day.

Spiritual questions and ongoing nightmares

For the rest, I don't know. I often wonder who is God? What did he do when I was in the camps? He is supposed to know everything that happens. Why did he not help us? I lost everything. What can I say? During the Second World War six million Jews died.

I survived. We Jews from Poland did better than the Jews from Holland or from Hungary and France. In our block, none of them survived. They were not tough enough. They were weak people, but we, Polish Jews, were already used to suffering and to a hard life. Being one of them, I could take all they did to me in stride.

Who is God? Where is he? Where was he during the Second World War? I don't know. I made it. But often I have wished to be dead instead. In the camp we had no Jewish holidays, no kosher food, no Sabbaths, no prayers. All days were the same. We worked hard, we just kept on moving. We

had no friends, no relatives. We all lived as long as life lasted, each one for himself or herself. All we were was a number.

When I came to the first work camp in Maidanek there were still too many of us. The Germans did not have time to tattoo a number on our arms, we were just given a piece of wood with a number on it. We were supposed to hang it around our necks with a piece of string.

Yes, I am happy to live in Canada. I have not been back in Warsaw. I don't want to go there. I have nobody there. Even to build up a new life in Canada was hard. When my second husband died I was just 39.

Sometimes I still have nightmares. I am standing again in the snow for endless roll calls. My feet are freezing cold. Even telling you my story today will haunt me for a few days. That is why some survivors don't want to be interviewed. They don't want to be reminded of that awful time. They try hard to forget. But they can't. They never will.

Dr. Kooistra is a retired Christian Reformed chaplain. He and his wife, Janette, live in Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, Ont.



"Now I was all alone. I had lost all I had, all those who had made life beautiful and worth living. Yet somehow, life went on. I went from camp to camp."

Comment

Too many ironies

Dear Dirk,

I'm a bit overwhelmed with what to write about this month. There's so much happening in the news it seems irresponsible not to comment on it, yet there's been so much said already – a lot of it noise – that I'm reluctant to add to the barrage of commentary. What sticks with me most is how much people have to say about it, when really all there is to say is nothing. Do you know what I mean? Rick Salutin of the *Globe and Mail* said it best: "Will all you people shut up so I can hear what I'm thinking?"

His column appeared the day after the high school shooting in Taber, Alberta. Salutin wrote about what he calls "the pornography of violence." Another article on the same page was headlined: "Rampage leads to ratings bonanza." Littleton was made for TV networks eager to cover the bloody drama.

I'm sure I don't need to tell you how sick this all is. And I am not saying I'm immune to it either. I watched a lot of TV news the week after the Littleton massacre. I watched even more the few days after the Taber shooting. (My brother attends high school in Lethbridge, not half an hour from Taber, and it just seemed way too close to merely file it away with the day's news.)

In between the two shootings, I had an e-mail conversation with an American friend now living in England. We both commented on how both countries – Canada and Britain – feel they are immune to such types of violence. I told her how the Canadian experts interviewed on the talk shows all said school shootings were an American phenomenon and discussed why they don't happen in Canada. And then the shooting in Taber, unfortunately proved them all wrong. In Britain, my friend said, the talk was about how America is full of gun fanatics — this is a country that just two years ago saw 16 young children from Dunblane murdered in a bloodbath — horrific — Littleton.



Dear Elizabeth:

It's interesting how people respond differently to this kind of tragedy. Some are concerned with media coverage. Others ask questions about gun control. Still others talk about the violence in our electronic media.

My own thinking about Colorado revolves around one thing which may have made the killers kill – their frustration with certain "jocks." I'm angered by how the body count may distract us from asking questions about American high school culture. I'd love to read a study on the dynamics of this world. And I can't help but ask certain questions. For example, if the jocks really verbally assaulted the killers the way some students said they did, to what degree did the killers have a right to be angry? How much of this anger was justified and how much wasn't? What about the verbal violence which we know goes on yet we cannot fully know?

For me, this is personal. I had a terrible high school experience. I remember the rough-necks, the tarts, the name-calling, the threats – as well as a concerned-and-caring (but ultimately useless) faculty. We had kids who were driven over the edge, driven to leave the school. The only difference is that none of them returned with a sawed-off shot gun in his (or her) hand.



Dirk,

Those years are rough. My first year of high school, compounded by a move to a new city, remains to this day the loneliest year of my life. Fortunately it got better, though I have no idea why, and the remaining years were a lot of fun. Pretty good, actually. But loneliness does make you go a little crazy and different people react in different ways. I never wished harm on anybody, but I certainly learned how to do without others to the point some would say is unhealthy.

But we all have to get through the rough times. What drove these kids so far over the edge that they weren't rational? I'm no psychologist, but isn't there a mechanism in our psyches that stops us from this kind of violence? Why wasn't theirs working?

One thing nobody is talking about, and should be mentioned, I think, is the terrible irony that we're worried about kids killing kids while we bomb Serbia to bits. This I don't get. How are we adults setting any kind of example to the children in our society when we say the answer to killing is to kill? I don't know the answer to this one either, but it certainly seems a lot more real than the movies or video games that are supposed to be such a bad influence.



Elizabeth,

I don't know if there's something in our heads that keeps us from doing anything that violent. It makes me feel more secure believing there is. But environments can do nasty damage to people – even our squeaky-clean, tulip-filled Dutch Calvinist world.

As for Kosovo, well, I don't know exactly what's going on. I read bits and pieces on the Internet every day, but I don't get NBC, ABC or CFTO, so I'm immune to the urgency and intensity of TV news coverage. Hmmm. Looks to me like we've come full-circle, Elizabeth. The same media which drives you up the wall allows you enough exposure on a subject to have an educated, confident opinion about it. Boy, are you ever lucky.

By the way, I'm not a pacifist. I think there's a time to kill (although the movie with Matthew McCaughnahey was a joke.)

Dirk



Elizabeth Salomons
egs@smarrt.com

Two
Under
35

Dirk Schouten
dbschouten@netscape.net

Dirk,

Another irony, to be cynical about the very media in which you are expressing yourself. I stopped watching the news on a daily basis the summer of Paul Bernardo's trial. Listening to the local Toronto newscast became a case of too much information.

What struck me then, and what I see happening again, is the force of the media as therapy. The kids in Colorado talked to reporters about how they spent time at the school with their classmates during the intense grieving period right after the shootings, trying to cope with the horrific reality of what they had been through. And then: "Every night we go home and watch it on the news. It's helping us heal."

I try not to rely on the news media to give me an informed opinion about the causes of wars though, Dirk. I read books for that. Here's another irony that had me doubled over in laughter when the Meech Lake Accord was being hotly debated in this country: a poll asking people whether they were opposed to the accord had a higher percentage rating than another question on the same poll that asked people how much they knew about the contents of the accord. How can you be opposed to something you've never read?

We're quick to have opinions these days, edited down to sound bites, and they have to be quickly formed. Journalists fly in and out of war zones, try to get a grip on hundreds of years of history, say something intelligent, and a few months later they've moved on to the next hot spot. That's a prime breeding ground for lack of perspective. Kosovo may be the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, but why isn't anybody talking about the millions of refugees in Sierra Leone? And when did a bombing campaign ever bring about democracy? Isn't the first casualty of war always the truth?

I don't have any answers here, Dirk. I'm sure you don't. But maybe enough's been said. For a while.



Elizabeth

Elizabeth,

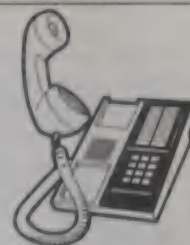
This has been an unsettling exchange. From the looks of it, in order to be a truly responsible, visionary Christian in the world of politics and media, one has to: 1) be aware of what's going on in the media without being run over by it; 2) be constantly reading books in order to have a well-developed perspective on a given situation; 3) be well-informed enough to point out inconsistencies in foreign policy and practice; and 4) be able to set aside rough experiences and get on with life.

Sometimes I don't know if I can do all that. Talk to you later.

Dirk

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News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

SOMETIMES I EXPRESS myself strongly and use "dog-goned" as an adjective. Although this has nothing to do with dogs that are gone, Mexico City would wish this were the case. Its inner city alone has two million roaming dogs. Their waste of close to 400 tons a day turns into airborne dog dust. The trouble is that Mexico City also has 13,000 corner foodstands catering to the millions of poor and working-class residents. The dog dust, and other dirty air particles, in this city known for its pollution, settles on the tortillas, the tamales and the salsa, feeding people but also chronic intestinal miseries, making the saying "leading a dog's life" literally true.

In folklore dogs are not generally well-treated: going to the dogs stems from the times when dogs weren't the pampered pets they are today, when these creatures had to live from the leftover table scraps, which reminds me of Indonesia somehow, where most people also lead a dog's life.

MAY 19 WAS not only the day when the hype-up *Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace* found its way to the public but was also the day when the presidential campaign in Indonesia started for the June 7 election. Indonesia is

not so much a country as a legal fiction imposed by Dutch colonialism. For the sake of convenience, my Dutch forebears treated these unconnected islands as if they were one. The ethnic mix in the Balkans pales in comparison with the mixture of ethnic groups, religions, languages and deep resentments which, until now, have been smoothed over in Indonesia with money and military might.

Due to the economic malaise there, these unifying factors are disappearing, only a miracle will keep the country together. If it does collapse it will be bad news for the world. Indonesia is strategically much more important than the Balkans because this string of islands lies between Persian Gulf oil and Japan and China, the latter in need of the former. And if this golden archipelago is destabilized, Singapore, a major economic and money centre, could be threatened as well.

In Indonesia, the Chinese, who make up one per cent of the population, hold 70 per cent of the economic power. As such, they have become the target of public wrath. The Chinese are leaving the country in droves, taking their billions with them. All this unrest has made China quite edgy, and with the U.S. deeply involved there as well,

chances are that Indonesia could well be the next global flashpoint.

OUR WORLD IS changing, and so are its peoples. I noticed it the other day when I went to the bank to make a deposit. Several people were waiting for the ATM; a quick glance inside the bank told me that nobody was in line there, so I went over and had a teller do the deposit, and was out before the first person had finished her job at the machine. My quick in-and-out did not seem to register with the line-standers at all. That made me wonder whether people have become so shy that they would rather punch in a PIN than deal with a person.

MY SUSPICIONS WERE confirmed when I noticed a report in which a Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford University psychologist, claims that he is worried that we are getting more shy as the decades pass, thanks to modern society and technology's role in it. Writes he: "When I first started doing studies on adult shyness in 1977, 40 per cent said it was a problem. Now it is up to 50 per cent and growing at one per cent per year."

It starts when children sit in front of a computer for hours and communicate by e-mail instead of face to face. Edmonton psychologist Jim Bateman agrees that technology is desocializing us, and that it is another sign of our dehumanization.

Faith is a four letter word spelled RISK. The more we put ourselves at risk the easier it is to overcome shyness. So break the ties of timidity and join a prayer group and after-service coffee hours, where listening is more rewarding than talking. And live longer and happier.

THIS SPRING HAS BEEN unseasonably dry in our neck of the woods. Very low humidity (identical to Arizona, the desert state) and almost continuous sunshine. So I wasn't surprised to read in a book by Dr Peter Gleick, director of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security in Oakland California "The year is 2017. Winter riots are breaking out in U.S. cities and European capitals in protest at skyrocketing prices for food and water. In Africa and Asia millions are dying of famine. The global

crisis has been brought on by six years of drought in North America, China and India, exacerbated by the bombing of the dams across the Middle East."

A picture of the near future as imagined by this learned man, one of the world's leading water scientists in a new report called *The World's Water: the Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources 1998-1999*. For weeks now I have looked at the zooming temperatures in New Delhi, constantly above 40 degrees C. If the monsoon there does not come soon, we will see immediate trouble there now. Today half the world's people lack basic sanitation services, while more than a billion have no drinkable water. For the first time ever, the amount of water available per person is falling, while demand is growing because water tables are being drained on every continent. Imagine: 25 per cent of the world's food supply comes from irrigation. Not oil, but water will be the cause of scarcity.

WHILE ON WATER: in a study of 48,000 men followed for 10 years, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health have found that those who consume the most liquid each day had a 50 per cent lower risk of bladder cancer. Make sure that you drink at least eight glasses of water a day. Canada is fortunate to have the largest body of fresh water in the world. I imagine that within a decade this stuff will be exported South. The well on our property pumps 35 gallons a minute, about 160 liters. So, if you ever run out, we might have a glass or two to spare.

I LISTENED TO CBC'S "Cross-Country Check-up" on May 16. The interesting question was "Can the world survive humanity?" In his opening statement David Suzuki gave his understanding of the Christian religion when he said that the Christians believe in an open mandate to exploit God's creation to take out of it whatever pleases them.

If this is the view of an educated secular person, I think we ought to thoroughly re-examine the way we communicate what we believe. Unless he is correct and, I am afraid that Dr. Suzuki is. That is what Christians, by and large, believe.

It makes me think that at this

point in history we don't need theologians: we need neo-geologists, people who live so in awe of God's good creation that they take on the lifestyle of the new creation.

I think we should familiarize (or refamiliarize) ourselves with what that Reformed statement of faith *The Belgic Confession* says about God being revealed first of all in his "most elegant book," creation. The earlier Christians, by and large, knew that book. We don't, and so grossly distort the meaning of the Bible. When Suzuki spoke in Belleville, Ontario, 1,000 people paid \$10 to hear him. I did not recognize any Christians or Christian school supporters there, most of whom I know

WILL THE WEATHER cause prices to shoot up? That's a question a lot of farmers are asking. So far, the Midwest spring has gone from very dry to very wet. March was one of the driest Marches on record there. Yet April and May have brought twice the normal amount of rain to many states and provinces, and now the soil has become waterlogged. Even moderate crop losses could take corn stocks to tight levels, and that would mean a significant upside potential for the market.

TALKING ABOUT farming reminds me of this snippet of news: people with a dairy-free diet after bowel surgery can slice three days off their hospital stay, said Dr. Peter Fielding at a meeting of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons.

I AM A TORONTO Maple Leafs fan, but only in the play-offs. So I have noticed that a lot of hockey players have fancy facial hair. Here beards seem to be in. Not so in Great Britain, where poll after poll reveals a deep distrust of beards: people suspect their wearers of hiding something, a shifty character, maybe, or a weak chin. Since the hairy 1970s, most Britons have come to see beards as untidy, old-fashioned, left wing - and just plain silly. "Beardo" and "weirdo" are often muttered in the same breath. Well, things must be different in North America. In our immediate family, all sons and sons-in-law sport beards, except one who has a moustache.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Clarence & Pearl Haayema —
Williamsburg, Ont.

Dick & Willie Haayema — Houston, B.C.

George & (Joyce †1975) Stad —
Smithers, B.C.

Clarence & Jane Vanderschaaf —
Smithers, B.C.

Tom & Janet Stad — Niton Junction, Alta.

Joe & Sadie Posthuma — Smithers, B.C.

Andy & Sandra Meints — Houston, B.C.

40 grandchildren (three with the Lord)
54 great-grandchildren.

Home address: Box 443, Smithers,
BC V0J 2N0

Nieuwerkerk a/d Yssel, Brampton, Ont.
Z.H., the Neth. Ont.

1939 June 8 1999
With thankfulness to our faithful God, we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our Father and Mother/ Dad and Mom/ Opa and Oma.

SYBRAND & WILLY KOOLE

With love from your children

Joe & Joan
Jani & Andy

John & Juanita
Cor & Dianne

Dora & Nick
Margaret & Larry

17 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren

Please join us in celebrating this anniversary at an open house on Saturday, June 12, 1999, DV at 2 p.m. in the Harmony Hall, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.

Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd.,
Providence Tower #502, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Maarum, Gr., Abbotsford, B.C.
the Neth. B.C.

1949 June 1 1999
We praise God for His love and faithfulness over the past 50 years.

ANNO & MARGARET OOSTERHOF
(nee DeJong)

With love and gratitude to our parents and grandparents:

Tina & Gary Van Ry
Amy, Brady, Christine

Ed & Dorothy Oosterhof
Colin, Glen, Stephen, Lisa,

Michael
Emily & Harry Vaandrager

Jason & Shaina, Julie, Michael,
Paul, Amanda

Janet & Henry Contant
David, Michelle

Marianne & John Mulder
Jonathan, Joshua, Joel, Jordan

Joyce & Alan Dykshoorn
Rachael, Aaron, Marissa, Derek

Betty & Brian Liewen
Matthew, Nathan, Jeremy,

Benjamin
Home address: 1404 — 33065 Mill
Lake Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 8E6

Saxbierum, Fr Sydenham, Ont.
the Neth. Ont.

1939 June 8 1999
With praise and thanksgiving we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

FRANS & DIEWUKE DAHM
(nee VANDERVEEN)

We pray that the Lord will bless you and keep you in the years to come

Ann & Stewart Klompmaaker
John & Heather, Timothy & Annetta

Yolanda
John & Lynda

Angie & John, Amy
Harry & Gail

Michael, Karen
Etta & Frank Censano

Shaun
Ed & Kim

Jillian, Jake
Dear great Pakie and Beppe of Christopher, Mitchell, Cameron and ?

Home address: Box 453, Sydenham,
ON K0H 2T0

1959 1999
Brandon, Moorefield, Ont.
Man. Ont.

We're so glad to be able to celebrate mom and dad's 40th wedding anniversary on June 11, 1999, DV. God has blessed us so much through them.

Praise the Lord!
Congratulations to

ANTHONY & JANET MOHLE
(nee VAN DONKERSGOED)

With love from all:

John & Marlene Mohle
Jody, Mike, Erika, Nikki

Gary & Lene Mohle
Jordan, Darren, Jason, Cameron

Ken & Margaret Mohle
Marianne Mohle

Daniel
Betty Geerlings & Bill Chalmers

Megan, Jessa
Please join us in celebrating at an open house on Friday, June 11, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at the Moorefield Community Centre, Moorefield, Ont.

Home address: R.R. 3, Moorefield,
ON N0G 2K0

Anniversaries

Owen Sound, Woodstock, Ont. Ont.

1954 June 23 1999
With thanksgiving to God from Whom all blessings flow, we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents

RAY & HELEN VANDER PLOEG
(nee MULLER)

With love from,

Joyce Cunningham — Hamilton, Ont.
Kathleen, Elizabeth, Curtis

Stewart Vander Ploeg († 1986)
Anita Hart — St. Thomas, Ont.

Michael, Shannon
Jeffrey Vander Ploeg — Woodstock, Ont.

Jane & Gerard Kuntz —
St. Catharines, Ont.

Calab, Logan, Reuben
Colin & Anita Vander Ploeg —

Edmonton, Alta.
Jonathan, Derek, Joseph

Gary & Teresa Vander Ploeg —
Hamilton, Ont.

An open house will be held Saturday,
June 19, 1999, at the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Highways 401 & 59N, Woodstock, Ont. from 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only.

Home address: 37 Brick Pond Lane,
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1

Obituary

'sGravendeel Z.H. Brampton, Ont.
the Neth. Ont.

April 27 1908 April 8, 1999
It is with sadness tempered with joy that we announce the passing of our mother and grandmother

ANTOINETTA HOFF
(nee SNEEP)

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one can snatch them out of my hand. (John 10: 27-28)

On Thursday, April 8, 1999, our beloved mother and grandmother was taken home to be with the Lord.

Antoinetta (Netta) was predeceased by her daughter Jeannie in 1942 aged 6 weeks and her husband Wim (Bill) in 1972.

Antoinetta will be sadly missed by her children:

Manan and Robert de Lint —
Campbellford, Ont.

Bill Hoff — Edmonton, Alta.
Elizabeth and Paul Wells —

Warkworth, Ont.
Janice and Reginald Johnstone —

Vancouver, B.C.
and her grandchildren

Mark, Ingrid and Michelle Hart, Eric,
Gordon and Justin Hoff

and her step grandchildren:
David Johnstone and Brian and

Lianne Johnstone
Sadly missed by her sister Loes Hoff

(nee Sneeep) in Rotterdam and by her brother-in-law Frits Smit in

Barendrecht, the Netherlands; her sisters-in-law Elsie Sneeep-Havinga in

Chatham, Ont., Nelly Brands-Rupke,
widow of Anthony Sneeep in Orillia,

Ont., and Marie Hoff-van Noort in
Pijnacker, the Netherlands

A memorial service was held April 12, 1999, at 2 p.m. at Holland Christian

Homes Heritage Hall, Brampton, Ont.,
Rev. Peter van Egmond officiating.

Correspondence address: M.J. de
Lint, R.R. 1, Campbellford, ON

K0L 1C0

Birthday

80th Birthday

JANE VANDER VEEN

of R.R. 7, Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z3
will celebrate her 80th birthday on
June 5.

Her children,
Walter Vander Veen
Ida & William Prins

Corry & Willem Kuyvenhoven
Gerry Morley

Rose and Brian Hodgson
Ed Vander Veen

and 15 grandchildren give thanks to
God for her many years and for her
example of Christian living. Family
and friends will celebrate at an open
house on Saturday, June 5, 1999,
from 1-4 p.m. at her home.



Classifieds

Anniversary



Best wishes to Klaas and Fenny Wierenga on their 40th wedding anniversary.

1959 May 25 1999
With praise and thanksgiving we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
KLAAS & FENNY WIERENGA
Congratulations Mom and Dad!
With love from
Sandy and Jeff Flynn
Brandon and Lucas
Jody and Jason Beamer
Jackie and John Correia
Home address: 374 Book Rd. N.,
Grimsby, ON L3M 2M6



Obituaries

Tzummarum, London,
the Neth. Ont.
1903 1999
Psalm 116
Surrounded by her family, in her 96th year.

RUTH (Reintje) HAAGSMA
(nee PASMA)
went to join her Lord on Tuesday, May 11, 1999.

We remember her and give thanks for the many years God has given her. Through the memories, joys and sorrows she experienced, her life was an example of faith and courage. All those she loved are called to share her deep faith and strength.
Beloved wife of the late Andrew Haagsma (†1989).
Dear mother of:
Betty & Richard Elema — London, Ont.
Jake & Gay — London, Ont.
John & Joanne — London, Ont.
Grace & the late Herman Louter — Hamilton, Ont.
Tip & Winnie — Samia, Ont.
Cecil & Ann — London, Ont.
Sheila — London, Ont.
Peter and Freda — Salford, Ont.
Minka — Toronto, Ont.
the late George
Also survived by 30 grandchildren, 64 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.
Dear sister of George and Alice Pasma of London, Ont. and sister-in-law of Alice and the late Tom Pasma of Springfield.
Also survived by sisters and brothers in Holland
Address: Sheila Haagsma, Grand Avenue, London, ON N6C 1L2

Obituaries

Oosterveer, Fr., Athens,
the Neth. Ont.
September 23, 1909 - May 8, 1999
Peacefully entered into rest at her residence to be with her Lord and Savior.
CATHERINE DEROOOS
(nee DEJONG)
Predeceased by her husband, Stewart DeRoos.
Loving daughter of Gerrit DeJong and Ynske DeJong (Dykstra) of North Augusta.
Loving mother of:
Yvonne & Peter Mulder — Athens, Ont.
Gordon & Patricia DeRoos — Addison, Ont.
Loving grandmother of:
Steven & Kimberly Mulder
Joanne & Stewart DeRoos
Dear sister of Peter DeJong (Corney) of Charleston Lake, Frank DeJong (Dorothy) of Addison and Berry DeJong (Cathy) of North Augusta.
Sister-in-law of Gerie Bouwers (Albert) of Metcalfe, Jackie Verburg (Nick) of Athens and Shirley Bouwers (Hans) of Newmarket, as well as several nieces and nephews.
The funeral service was held May 11, 1999, in the Athens Christian Reformed Church, Athens, Ontario.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."
(Ps. 121: 1, 6)
On Sunday, May 2, 1999, the Lord took home our dear brother-in-law and uncle, at the age of 74.
TED BAKKER
Dear husband of Alice Bakker (nee Buitenhuis).
Egbert & Riek Buitenhuis — Guelph, Ont.
Jan & Henny Buitenhuis — Thunder Bay, Ont.
Jeneke Buitenhuis-Weikamp — Hardenberg, Ov., Neth.
Jenny Brink-Buitenhuis — Gramsbergen, Ov., Neth.
Gail & George Meyerink — Dunnville, Ont.
Roel & Meta Buitenhuis — Kakabeka Falls, Ont.
Mien & Andre Smid — Heemserveen, Ov., Neth.
Be Vos — Utrecht, Neth.
Nieces and Nephews
Correspondence address: Mrs. Alice Bakker, R.R. 3, Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4V2

INEKE JANSEN
(nee WESTSTEYN)
received peace on May 2, 1999. The Lord in his infinite wisdom took to himself his child in her 55th year. Dear wife to Herbert and dear mother to Kim, Susan and Nicholas of Kentville, N.S.
Dear sister and sister-in-law to Joan & Haddy Smadema of Georgetown, Ont., Corry & Ralph Vos of Carlisle, Ont., and Ankie and the late Archie Weststeyn of Georgetown, Ont. Dear aunt to many nieces and nephews.
A private family interment took place on May 7, 1999, in Lakeview Cemetery, Lakeville, N.S., followed by a memorial service at the Christian Reformed Church of Kentville, N.S. Pastor Norman Visser officiated.
Jansen residence: 201 Campbell Rd., Kentville, NS B4N 1Y6

Obituaries

March 5, 1917 - April 20, 1999
Our Lord and Saviour called our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
GEERTRUIDA BOUTERSE
to dwell in His home in glory.
"The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."
Beloved wife of Harry.
Dear mother of:
Dick & Tina Bouterse — Samia, Ont.
Rick, Tricia, Caitlin, Sandra & Steve
Alice Bouterse — Tillsonburg, Ont.
Linda & Henry Devos — Edmonton, Alta.
Lisa, Julia
Jack & Nancy Bouterse — Samia, Ont.
Nathan, Marcus, Kimberly
The funeral service was held at Second Christian Reformed Church, Samia, Ont. on April 23, 1999.
Correspondence address: Harry Bouterse, 1270 Pontiac Court, #302, Samia, ON N7S 4Y8

1920 - 1999
Our father, grandfather and great-grandfather
SIEBE (SYDNEY) DYKSTRA
passed away on May 1, 1999, after a long illness. While we feel the pain of his absence, we are encouraged by the fact that he was more than ready to go home to his Lord.
Siebe Dykstra was born in Anjum, Friesland on August 26, 1920. He married Johanna Douma on September 29, 1942, and together they immigrated to Winnipeg in June, 1947. They raised their ten children on the family farm in Blackdale, while Siebe continued to work in construction in the city.
Siebe is remembered with much love and respect by his ten children:
Sophie and Bruce — Winnipeg, Man.
Bodie and Heather — Ste Anne, Man.
Jeannie and Ben — Selkirk, Man.
Mane and Jim — Oromocto, N.B.
Hilde and Harry — Brampton, Ont.
Linda and Bill — New Westminster, B.C.
Joanne and Joe — Cochrane, Alta.
Grace and Wally — Winnipeg, Man.
Jeff and Pam — Lethbridge, Alta.
Lil and Clarence — Brandon, Man.
He is also missed by his 42 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.
Siebe was predeceased by his loving wife Johanna on August 23, 1986, and by two sons-in-law, John Vanderhoof (1986) and Alan Poole (1996).
Dad's focus and joy in life was to care for his wife and family and to see them flourish. To his family and friends, his daily life was a quiet expression of his wholehearted Christian faith and his appreciation for all creation around him. In his last days dad was encouraged by the words of Psalm 73:26: "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." His family draws comfort from the fact that the truth of these words was evident in his passing from this life.
Correspondence Address:
Grace and Wally Buikema,
163 Grandview St., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0L4

Anniversary

It is with joy and thanksgiving we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents

JACK & TITIA HIEMSTRA
(nee PRINS)
Wedding date: May 16, 1959
We, their children and grandchildren rejoice with them!
Ann & Alan Dhingra — St. Mary's, Ont.
Noel, Jade
Leo & Anita Hiemstra — Brampton, Ont.
Chelsey, Derek, Evan
Gwen & Peter DeBruyne — St. Catharines, Ont.
Jacob, Daniel, Zachary, Nicholas
Tom & Lisa Hiemstra — Stratford, Ont.
Home address:
89 Mill St. S.
Brampton, ON L6Y 1T1

Obituaries

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (Phil. 3:20-21)
On April 28, 1999, the Lord took unto Himself our beloved son-in-law, brother-in-law, and uncle.

ALEX HUININK
beloved husband of Bernice Huinink-Grevers — Embro, Ont.
Our prayer is that the Lord may comfort and strengthen Bernice and her family.
Gerrit & Dina Grevers — Woodstock, Ont.
Ria & Ben Krabbe — Listowel, Ont.
Ben & Brenda Grevers — Paris, Ont.
Jane & Al Been — Belmont, Ont.
Dorothy & Gerry Vaandering — London, Ont.
Gerald & Rita Grevers — Atwood, Ont.
Judy & John Wubs — Brantford, Ont.
13 nieces and nephews

It is with deep sadness that the family of
HENDRIK (HENRY) A. WINTER
announces his passing in his 90th year of life on May 11, 1999.
It is with great joy that we celebrate the gift of eternal life which God has granted him.
Beloved husband of Johanna Jager
Cherished father of:
Peter & Nell Winter
Bé Winter (with the Lord)
Grace & Hank Rumph
Jake & Alice Winter
Ann & John Krier
Bé Winter (with the Lord)
Ben & Julie Winter
Henry & Emma Winter
John & Jacomina Winter
Reynold & Cathy Winter
Gerda & Brian van Staalduinen
Ellen & John Hulse
Joanne & Ted Parker
Along with 42 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by two sons, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
A memorial service was held on May 14, 1999, at the Hope Christian Reformed Church in Brantford, Ont., Rev. James VanWeelden officiating.
Correspondence address: Mrs. Johanna Winter, Shelton Manor, 12 Bartlett St., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Classifieds

Anniversary	Teachers	For Rent	Job Opportunities
<p>1974 June 8 1999 The Lord willing, we hope to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary with our family and friends.</p> <p>CLARENCE W. POORTINGA and PAT POORTINGA (nee VAN LINGEN)</p> <p>Please join us in celebrating at an open house on Saturday, June 12, 1999, from 2-5 p.m. at the Clinton & District Christian School in Clinton, Ont.</p> <p>Best wishes only please. Home address: RR 2, Brussels, ON N0G 1H0 519-887-9747</p>	<p>SASKATOON, Sask: Saskatoon Christian School is an accredited, independent, interdenominational school. We are accepting resumes for a junior position to teach language arts, social studies and physical education. Please include with the resume a statement of faith and philosophy of Christian education. Send to:</p> <p>Wes Vanstone, Principal 2410 Haultain Ave. Saskatoon, SK S7J 1R3 phone: 306-343-1494 fax: 306-343-0366</p> <p>DUNCAN, B.C.: Duncan Christian Secondary School, an interdenominational school located in British Columbia on Vancouver Island, has an opening for a teacher with Secondary Science and Computer/Business Education strengths. Interested candidates should be committed Christians, have or be able to obtain a B.C. teaching certificate, have the flexibility to teach several science courses as well as continue to develop and direct the school's computer program. Applicants should send resumes to:</p> <p>Mr. H. Fritschy, Principal Duncan Christian Secondary School 495 Beech Avenue Duncan, BC V9L 3J8 phone: 250-746-3654 fax: 250-746-9980</p>	<p>Rooms for rent for students (male or female) in Christian home. \$200-350/mo. Near Redeemer College, Mohawk College and Christian High School. 905-383-1242.</p> <p>Personal</p> <p>Christian single male, 33, working with learning-disabled students, would like to make friends of the opposite sex in NB, ON or QC. Please send your e-mail to: maximgstg@hotmail.com or letter to: Maxim Gendron, 1225 130th Street, St-Georges, QC G5Y 7Y6</p> <p>Retired Dutch Canadian widower, 63, United Reformed, would like to meet Christian lady, southern Ontario. Please send letters to File #2687, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.</p> <p>Young-looking and -thinking man in early 70's seeking independent lady companion with similar interests: classical music, the outdoors, reading and cooking, perhaps even fishing. A good sense of fun and humour would be an asset. Please send your letter to File #2690, #4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.</p>	<p>Rimbey Christian School, located in Central Alberta, invites applications for the position of Principal/Administrator for the 1999/2000 school year.</p> <p><i>Rimbey Christian School, established in 1986, is a vibrant and positive inter-denominational K-12 school affiliated with Christian Schools International.</i></p> <p>Interested applicants should forward a detailed resume including a statement of faith and philosophy of Christian education to:</p> <p>Mr. Brian Wheale, Chairman Rimbey Christian School Society Box 90, Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0 phone/fax: 403-843-3904 e-mail: richrsc@telusplanet.net</p>
<p>Church News</p> <p>Our pastor, Rev. James Mantel, will be retiring this year and we will be seeking a new pastor for our congregation. Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, Alberta, Canada.</p>			
<p>Teachers</p> <p>NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland Marsh District Christian School is looking for a Grade 7 teacher for the 1999-2000 school year. Ability to teach band is an asset but not a must. If you are interested in being part of our team, please contact:</p> <p>Mr. Henry Liss, Principal HMDCS 18955 Dufferin St., R.R. 2 Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9 phone 905-775-3701 fax 905-775-2395 e-mail: hmdcs@neptune.on.ca website: www.neptune.on.ca/~hmdcs</p>			
<p>OAKVILLE, Ont.: John Knox Christian School is presently accepting applications for the following position: Maternity Leave for Primary/Junior. Applicants must hold a valid teaching certificate and be able to integrate computers into the curriculum. Position begins August 30th until March Break 2000 (March 10). Please submit resume and letter of application by Friday, June 4 to:</p> <p>Mrs. L. Keith, Principal John Knox Christian School 2232 Sheridan Garden Dr. Oakville, ON L6J 7T1</p>	<p>PORT ALBERNI, B.C.: Port Alberni Christian School, an interdenominational school located on Vancouver Island, with approximately 90 students in K-9, invites applications from qualified teachers for an upper elementary/junior high position. Strengths in Music or Computer Studies will be an asset. Please send resume and letter of application to:</p> <p>Wernart van Deventer Port Alberni Christian School 4006 - 8th Ave. Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4S4 phone: 250-723-2700 fax: 250-723-5799</p>	<p>Teachers</p> <p>BRAMPTON, Ont.: John Knox Christian School is inviting applications for an opening in the intermediate level. Specialties in Science and French would be an asset but not absolutely necessary. Please send a resume, including a philosophy of Christian education to:</p> <p>Ms. Hilda Roukema John Knox Christian School 82 McLaughlin Rd. S. Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7 phone: 905-451-3236 fax: 905-451-3448</p>	<p>CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF VICTORIA on Vancouver Island in southwestern B.C. is seeking a Full-time Pastor - solo position.</p> <p>CCC is one of two CRC churches in Victoria, with 128 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package please contact:</p> <p>Heidi DeGroot 4649 Boulderwood Dr., Victoria, BC V8Y 3G5 phone 250-558-0062, fax 250-727-9604, or e-mail jdegroot@engr.uvic.ca</p>
<p>Job Opportunity</p> <p>WOODBIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Christian High School invites applications for a possible position as full-time on site technologist. The beginning date is negotiable, however it must be some time before September 1999. Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:</p> <p>Ren Siebenga c/o Toronto District Christian High School 377 Woodbridge Ave. Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8</p>	<p>For rent</p> <p>One bedroom apartment Spacious, newly renovated, basement apartment located in a quiet neighborhood with mature trees. Shared laundry facilities and family rec room. Private entrance, parking, kitchen and four-pcs bath. No pets permitted. No smoking. Suitable for one person. \$300. incl. utilities. Available immediately. Ancaster. 905-648-1166 (call after 6 p.m.)</p>	<p>CHATHAM, Ont.: Chatham Christian High School is seeking applications for teaching positions for September 1999 in the following areas: Science and Computers. Teachers interested in joining our team of dedicated Christian teachers should address their application to:</p> <p>Mr. John Van Pelt Chatham Christian High School 90 Park Avenue East Chatham, ON N7M 3V4 phone 519-352-4591 fax 519-352-3476</p>	<p><i>Do you love Jesus? We do.</i></p> <p>Full Time Youth Director</p> <p>Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta, is seeking a leader (new position) to expand and develop existing youth programs at the junior, senior and post high school levels, to nurture a love for Jesus and a desire to serve him among our youth.</p> <p>Please direct inquiries and resumes to Bethel Christian Reformed Church c/o Jack Oudman, 5704 51 Ave. Lacombe, AB T4L 1K8 phone 403-782-2667 fax 403-782-2542</p>
	<p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES</p> <p>available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>	<p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services.</p> <p> CRC</p> <p>Contact: R. Vander Ploeg Secy./Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4Y 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p>	<p>Administrative Opening for August 1999 Emmanuel Christian Academy is looking for a Teaching Principal for grades JK - 8, with 55 students. Responsibilities will include 40% administration and 60% teaching. Send resume and philosophy of Christian education to:</p> <p>Bill Middleton EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY 294 County Road 34 East R.R. 2, Ruthven, ON N0P 2G0 phone: 519-839-4874 fax: 519-839-4875</p>

Classifieds

The Christian Reformed Church in North America
is seeking applicants for the new position of

Associate Editor for Worship and Music

for CRC Publications. This position is funded for a minimum of two years. Depending on availability and interests of the applicant, the position could be half-time to full-time.

The **qualified applicant** must have
 ♪ an understanding of Reformed music with particular emphasis on a contemporary worship setting;
 ♪ keyboard and/or guitar-vocal performance skills;
 ♪ competence in notating, harmonizing, and editing worship music in different styles;
 ♪ and an ability to lead workshops.

Responsibilities include serving as primary editor and/or project manager on a variety of projects and working with the worship and music editor in developing a wide range of worship resources for the church.

A college and/or seminary **degree in music and/or worship** is required, along with a number of years of **worship leadership experience** in congregations that have explored diversity in both traditional and contemporary music.

Further information and a detailed job description are available upon request. For consideration, please submit a letter of interest along with your resume by **June 23, 1999**, to:

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49560 U.S.A.
voice: 616-224-5881
fax: 616-224-5895
e-mail: colemann@crcna.org



SALEM

Christian Mental Health Association requires a

PROGRAM-DEVELOPER

This part-time position with full-time potential will involve the implementation of Salem's Program/ Project initiative in partnership with church and community groups.

MAJOR TASKS

- ☐ raise the level of mental health needs awareness
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MINIMAL QUALIFICATIONS

- ☐ experience in counselling
- ☐ masters degree in a related behavioural field
- ☐ commitment to the Christian faith
- ☐ ability to relate well to all levels of the reformed community and other faith communities
- ☐ experience in program development
- ☐ excellent communication skills (verbal and written).

We offer a pleasant work environment, a competitive salary, and travel allowance. Send application and resume to:

Rev. Albert Dreise,
Salem Christian Mental Health Association
 512 - 1 Young St., Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8

phone: 905-528-0353
fax: 905-528-3562
e-mail: aldreise@wchat.on.ca

The First Victoria Christian Reformed Church,
 in the capital city of beautiful British Columbia,
 is seeking a

FULL-TIME PASTOR

to begin as early as July 1999

to provide sound biblical preaching that has a motivating effect on the youth of today as well as the youth of yesterday. In addition, the pastor will provide leadership in worship, church education and pastoral care. The church consists of 243 professing, and 86 non-professing members, who enjoy a variety of worship expressions. Pastors interested in a potential call are encouraged to submit their resumes. A church profile is available. Please contact:

Gerry Ensing, Search Committee Chair
 c/o First Christian Reformed Church

661 Agnes Street
 Victoria, BC, V8Z 2E7 CANADA

phone: 250-479-5124
fax: 250-479-0899

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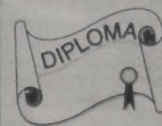
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 3000

The first Christian Reformed Church organized in Canada will celebrate its centennial on November 19, 2005 D.V.

The church restoration committee is working towards completing the restoration of the original church in time for this celebration.

However, the committee is in need of finances toward this end.

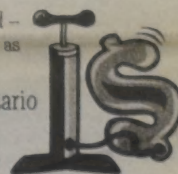
We are hereby asking all former members of the church and other individuals interested in seeing this project completed to send a tax deductible donation to the **Nobelford CRC Heritage Fund**
 Box 179, Nobleford, AB T0L 1S0.



How to Start an R.E.S.P. now for the future
Christian Higher Education
 of your child or grandchild (where the government adds 20%, up to \$400 per year).

1. The parent must apply for a S.I.N. for the child or grandchild (ages 0 to 15)
2. Then just call Joe Reitsma, London Life Representative, at 1-800-791-1324, ext. 259. Leave your name, phone number, and a time when I can call you back.
3. I'll provide you with the information you need -- and get some additional details from you, as necessary. And then the plan can be set up.

Serving all of Ontario
 Joe Reitsma, 98 Wellington St.,
 Bowmanville, ON L1C 1V7
 phone: 905-623-8887



It's as easy as 1-2-3

CALVIN College

Calvin College has an opening for an

Event Coordinator

in the **Office of Conferences & Campus Events**. This position assists in administration and organization of events and conferences on campus.

Qualifications include:

- ① a Bachelor's degree;
- ② prior experience with supervision and facility management;
- ③ proven analytical, communication, organization, administrative and interpersonal skills;
- ④ should be computer literate;
- ⑤ must have a positive nature and flexibility in work style.

Submit resumes to:
Human Resources
Calvin College
 3201 Burton SE
 Grand Rapids, MI
 49546 USA



Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or if the event will be of significant interest to our readers. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$2.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- June 2 Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m., Ds. J.S. Hellings: "Samen op weg voor het nieuwe millenium", York, Ont.
 June 9 Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m., Community Centre, Moorefield, Ont. (#)
 June 9 Hollandse Dag, 10 a.m., First CRC, Kingston, Ont. For more info: 613-546-5615.
 June 13 Dutch Service, Rev. Peter Egmond, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)
 June 14-17 Avond 4 Daagse (4 Day Evening Walk), Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, Ont. For more information: 905-637-6747.
 June 16 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal, Que., 12:10 p.m. Free admission. (#)
 June 24 The picnic for those who attended the "Lake Alfred Ministries" in Florida will be held D.V. in Southside Park, Woodstock, Ont. starting at 10 a.m. Phone 519-539-0981.
 June 26 Gruninger Picnic, Grand River Conservation Authority Park, Rockwood, Ont., starting at 10 a.m. Free admission. For information, call Harry Klungel at 519-235-0719.



We wish to announce the retirement of

Jenny Van Belle

on June 25, 1999, after devoting 40 years of her life to Christian Education

"Well done, good and faithful servant."
Matthew 25:21

We are so proud of you and we love you lots

Harry
Alisha & Criss
Jessica, Forest
Terry & Elizabeth
David
Home Address:
10517 69 St.
Edmonton, AB
T6A 2S7

Schools in which Jenny has taught since 1959:
Lacombe Chr. School, AB
Wellandport Chr. School, ON
Calvin Chr. School, Hamilton, ON
Athens Chr. school, ON (Principal)
Shanon Heights Chr. School, Langley, BC
Dundas Chr. School, ON (remedial)
Edmonton West Chr. School, AB (remedial)



Events

Announcing ... Principal Glenn A. Ewald Retirement

Join us in an evening of praise to our Heavenly Father for Glenn's 36 years of commitment to Christian Education. Date: **Saturday, June 26, 1999**, D.V. Notes may be sent to Bulkley Valley Christian School, Box 3635, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0, fax: 250-847-3564, e-mail: bvschool@bulkley.net. Anyone who knows Glenn is warmly welcomed to join us for fellowship and a social evening beginning at 5 p.m. Contact Teresa Reitsma for more information at 250-847-5503.

Alumni, Parents, Friends, Colleagues

Come Celebrate with us



WAYNE DROST'S Love for Christian Education Retirement Open House

Saturday, June 12, 1999, 2 - 5 p.m. (3 p.m. formal program)
 Lambton Christian High School, 295 Essex St., Sarnia, Ont.
 Program contributions and written tributes welcome. Please contact:
 Anita Prange Diane Plug, 519-542-5849
 519-542-2907 email: dplug@ebtech.net, fax: 519-383-6304



Calvin Christian School, Hamilton, Ontario, is hosting a RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

in honour of

Miss Wilma Huizinga

who is retiring after 38 years of teaching.

Friends, relatives, former students and colleagues

are cordially invited to join us at

Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton
 (corner of West 5th Street and Mohawk Road)

for a special program to be held

Thursday, June 24, 1999, at 7:30 p.m.

A standing reception will follow at 8:30 p.m.

For more information please contact
 the school office at 905-388-2645
 or G. Hornsvelt at 905-679-6539.



WHAT!? You thought we'd bronze his last copy of *Christian Courier*, and give him a handsome gold watch? Just because **BERT WITVOET IS RETIRING?!**

Sorry, Bert, you're getting roasted - and everyone's invited to watch (get it?!)

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 7:30 p.m.

Jubilee Fellowship CRC, 13 Wilholme Drive, St. Catharines, Ont.

Bert, don't read this part: Anyone who is willing to pour fuel on the barbeque is asked to contact Marian Van Til at 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838. If Bert answers, hang up and try your call again. We're trying to keep this a secret.

THE SEAFARERS CENTRE

201, rue de la Commune Ouest
 Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 2C9

THE CRC SEAWAY MINISTRY IN MONTRÉAL, A CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY OUTREACH TO INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS, NEEDS YOU.

VOLUNTEERS.

We need **volunteers** to help us keep the Centre running smoothly during the late spring, summer and fall. We will supply you with a furnished apartment. To request a stay of 1-4 weeks, please contact one of the numbers below.

HOST COUPLE.

We also need a **host couple**. This salaried position, which involves working with international seafarers in presenting the gospel through hospitality, requires a mature couple who would make Montréal their home for 1 or 2 years. For further information, please contact one of the numbers below.

phone: 514-844-1476 fax: 514-844-1472
 e-mail: <seafarer@ietc.ca> attention: Karin

News

Ontario government has done nothing for educational equality, says coalition

Bert Witvoet

You could tell there was an election looming in Ontario long before the writ was dropped. Parties were already sharing platforms with the electorate, even though the ink was not yet dry on the written copy of the throne speech.

The Ontario Multi-Faith Coalition for Equity in Education decided not to wait for the dissolution of this new session of the provincial parliament to write an open letter to Premier Mike Harris. Their question: "When will the Ontario government do public justice to minority faith communities' legal/equality rights in education?"

The coalition reminded the premier of his letter dated April 21, 1995, in which he stated that "the inclusion of denominational and other private schools in the existing funding structure should become part of the mandate of the Working Group dealing with education finance."

"Here we are, nearly four years later," writes David Freeman and M.D. Khalid, co-chairs of the



Mike Harris

Multi-Faith Coalition, "and despite requests for positive action on your election promises, our Multi-Faith Coalition and its many active supporters across Ontario are still waiting for you and the Minister of Education to act in the interest of educational justice for all, without discrimination."

In a letter of response dated March 17, 1999, Premier Harris

expressed appreciation for the letter and said that he had passed it on to the Honorable David Johnson, Minister of Education. The latter, in an April 1 letter, told the coalition that "the government's present focus is on improving the publicly funded school system," but promised that the coalition's views and requests "will be taken into consideration as we consider future educational initiatives."

Enter Gerald Vandezande, government relations co-ordinator for the coalition, who in an April 29 letter reminded the Premier of his earlier promise. "Our coalition is deeply disappointed that the government has done *absolutely nothing* to implement the Premier's 1995 election promises to us," writes Vandezande. "What has prevented you from doing so? We expect public promises to be kept."

Vandezande asked why the Premier or the Education Minister had not addressed the coalition's rationale for educational equity and fiscal fairness in their recent letters. He reminded Harris of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 (III): "Parents



Gerald Vandezande

have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Vandezande says educational opportunity was a real issue in the 1995 elections and that it will again be a major concern for voters in 1999. He asked the Premier for an immediate meeting "so that we can reach a clear agreement on a genuinely just solution based on legal equality and fiscal fairness for all, without discrimination based on creed, faith, ideology, religion or core values."

Alcoholism is an 'equal-opportunity' disease: conference

Rick Jongejans

BURLINGTON, Ont. — What do Reformed doctrine and alcoholism have in common? According to Dr. Richard Grevengoed, keynote speaker at a recent Family Outreach conference, plenty.

"Every square inch of a person's life, every conceivable part, needs the renewing power of Christ," he said to a gathering of about 70 people in Burlington, Ontario, on March 27. Alcoholism, he explained, is a progressive disease which affects all aspects of a person's life, contracted by people with a susceptibility for it. In fact, everyone in the family is affected too. Furthermore, alcoholism tends to run along family tree lines.

"What three things do we need to know to live and die happily?" asks the *Heidelberg Catechism* (Question 2). The first part of the answer is a bit awkward, admitted Dr. Grevengoed with candid humor, because we don't know what to do with the verb. It states, "first, how great my sin and misery are."

Grevengoed asserted that Dr. Abraham Kuyper took this seriously because it meant that there is no part of the universe which is not corrupted by evil. And so it is with alcoholism. It affects the physical,

psychological, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of life. But it is too simplistic to say that alcoholism equals sin, asserted Grevengoed.

'It's your fault'

Typically, alcoholics blame others for their drinking. Because of the "obsession of the mind, and the craving of the body," alcoholics begin to delude themselves. They start thinking they are God. This "stinking thinking" as recovering alcoholics call it, pervades all their relationships. This grandiosity is called "self-will run riot" by people in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Recovery from this illness starts to happen when, among other things, the victim turns in his or her "God-badge" and lets Jesus take over. Recovery takes courage and requires the fellowship of understanding people in AA and in the church. But the process of recovery for the family involves everyone who is closely aligned with the victim.

Said Grevengoed, "The alcoholic system tends to revolve around the addict." Having protected or covered up for the addict for so long, these people all need

healing. There is embarrassment, shame, guilt, fear and hurt. Often there has been abuse and ridicule as well. But alcoholism is no respecter of color, creed, ethnicity or wealth accumulation. It is an "equal-opportunity" disease.

References in the Bible refer to wine as a good gift from God, said Grevengoed. When used normally, "wine gladdens the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15). But the Bible also warns about drinking too much wine (Prov. 23:20), against getting drunk (Eph. 5:18). Normal use of alcohol would include using it medicinally (1 Tim. 5:23).

More than faith required

We now know that alcoholics process alcohol differently than other people. Hundreds of scientific studies have shown that the liver converts alcohol into chemicals which, in turn, trigger mechanisms in the brain that alter reality for the drinker. He or she becomes expert at deceit and denial. It's not simply a matter of having enough faith to "overcome."

Ironically, people on their way to becoming alcoholic typically have a high tolerance for alcohol. This is one of the tell tale signs of alcoholism, said Grevengoed.

But people, institutions and churches often enable alcoholics to stay sick or become sicker. For example, the jury system in the U.S., Grevengoed said, has (especially in the past) tended to be lenient towards those charged with "driving under the influence" because of the sympathetic "conscience" of one or more of the 12 jurors. Likewise, diaconates, although well-intentioned, ought to be careful about providing money for the family of an alcoholic. Other avenues of compassion ought to be explored, he said.

Many of the participants spoke of the "brutal honesty" of the speaker. They identified with his introspective comments about his past and about the history of the church. For example, he stated that mental illness during the 1950s carried an immense shame stigma, much like alcoholism still does today.

As a Christian community we need to learn that "we are all broken people" and that "all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God," Grevengoed said. We need to strive to love each other unconditionally, as God loved us.

News Digest

Gambling banned in Mongolia

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia (Religion Today) — Mongolia's Parliament banned gambling on the advice of Christian groups. They passed two anti-gambling laws, blocking the opening of a casino in an Ulan Bator hotel. The former communist nation has had a free market economy for nine years, and it is too soon to introduce gambling, said Mongolian Minister of Justice L. Tsog. He said that the associated drug dealing, prostitution, and other crimes would counteract the benefits of the 600 new jobs the casino would have provided.

Cardboard houses

TORONTO — Home builder Rod Doran has one solution for homelessness: cardboard houses. Doran and his partners are building homes out of cardboard that can be set up by two unskilled workers in two days, reports the *Toronto Star*. The homes are guaranteed for five years and Doran says they'll likely survive for 25 years.

They're designed to withstand a Northern Ontario winter or a Vancouver rain for years. In fact, it was temporary housing for miners and loggers in remote areas of Canada that Doran first had in mind when he started drawing up plans for his cardboard homes.

Today, he feels his invention could best be used to help people living in misery, whether in downtown Toronto, on the Macedonian border of Kosovo, or in the earthquake-ravaged villages of Colombia.

Space-age bagels

DENVER, Colo. — Bagels would be an excellent food on Mars or the moon, contends Martha Stone, a professor of food sciences and human nutrition at Colorado State University.

"Bagels are a good source of protein, a good source of carbohydrates," says Stone. She and a team are studying what astronauts will eat on the moon, Mars or a space station, reports the *Globe and Mail*. One of Stone's graduate students has submitted a proposal to study space-age bagels. Charles Bourland, NASA's manager of space-station foods, has told researchers that he's looking for food products that have a stable shelf-life of three to five years.